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HINTS AND HELPS

IN

PASTORAL THEOLOGY.

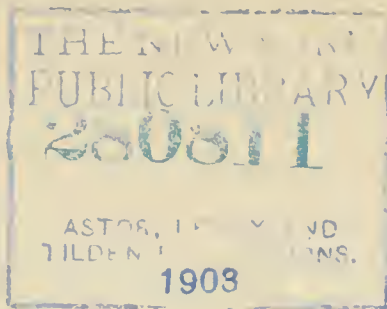
BY

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HINTS AND HELPS  
IN  
PASTORAL THEOLOGY.



# HINTS AND HELPS

IN

## PASTORAL THEOLOGY.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY.

ALL the great truths of Pastoral Theology are drawn from God's Word. They are illustrated in human experience. They have considerable prominence in Scripture. The Bible is not one continued treatise, but consists of sixty-six distinct books. Of these, thirty-nine are in the Old Testament, and twenty-seven in the New. Scattered throughout the sacred volume are histories, warnings, instructions, and examples aiding us in this matter. In the Old Testament is found no book in the epistolary form. But in the New Testament we have twenty-one epistles. Of these, Paul is the author of fourteen. If we divide the New Testament into forty-five parts, Paul is the author of thirteen of them, or considerably more than one fourth of the whole. Of Paul's fourteen epistles, three are Pastoral. They are so called because they chiefly relate to the office, work, duties, and rewards of Christian pastors and evangelists. These were among the last of Paul's writings, and the Second Epistle to Timothy was the very last thing he ever wrote. However excellent and numerous may be the



treatises respecting the work of the ministry, it will be readily confessed that there is great advantage in even a brief inspired treatise on the subject. Good ministers wish to know the mind of God in the very words of the Holy Ghost. Now we have three inspired epistles on this subject, and all of them fitly written by "such an one as Paul the aged," who was also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. Elihu spoke as truly as he spoke modestly when he said, "Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom." There was also great fitness in Paul's addressing these epistles to his dear young friends who were in the sacred office, and were well approved for their piety, fidelity, and ability. Paul sent these solemn charges, instructions, and encouragements, not to wild, erratic men, but to men of high repute. This shows that the best need all the help they can get. In fact, the most useful and promising among ministers are the most apt to profit by good hints and precepts.

There is no reason to doubt that Paul was the author of the First Epistle to Timothy. The first verse so claims, and there is no weight in any conjecture to the contrary. It is commonly regarded as the twelfth in order of his writing. Lardner dates it as early as the year 56; Michaelis, 58; Pearson, Horne, and Tomline, 64; Le Clerc, L'Enfant, Cave, Fabricius, Mill, Macknight, Paley, Lloyd, Scott, and our authorized version, 65. Horne and Slade think this epistle was written from Macedonia, though the subscription and authorized version date it from Laodicea, which was the capital of Phrygia Pacotiana in Asia Minor.

The design of this epistle is easily learned from its contents. Throughout, one theme—the right character and conduct of a Gospel minister—is prominent. In the third chapter, verses 14, 15, Paul says, "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry



long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

Timothy was born in Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, in Asia Minor: Acts xvi., 1. His father was a Greek: Acts xvi., 3. His mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were Jewesses: Acts xvi., 1; 2 Tim. i., 5. Paul may have been the means of Timothy's conversion, but that is by no means certain. True, Paul calls him "mine own son in the faith;" but that may mean that Timothy was a man much to Paul's mind, and acted toward him as if he were a son. The narrative in Acts xvi., 1-3, would seem to teach that Timothy was a disciple before he saw Paul. Paul circumcised Timothy: Acts xvi., 3. He took a prominent part in his ordination to the work of a minister: 1 Tim. iv., 14; 2 Tim. i., 6. Timothy was with Paul in many of his journeys and labors: Acts xvi., 4; Rom. xvi., 21. Paul calls him "my work-fellow." Timothy suffered imprisonment for Christ: Heb. xiii., 23. How long it lasted, we know not—probably not long. We have no certain information respecting the time and manner of Timothy's death. He did not enjoy good health, even when young, but had many bodily ailments: 1 Tim. v., 23.

The peculiarities of style in this epistle are not such as to demand very extended notice. The thoughts are very much condensed. Two classes of men abound in the use of the adjective—young men, who are laboring to make their thoughts impressive, and old men, who wish to condense as much as possible. In this epistle, as in that to Titus, there is great condensation.

Next to the First Epistle to Timothy in order of time, and closely allied to it in pith and scope, is the Epistle to Titus. This was probably the thirteenth of Paul's epistles, though Hug puts it as the third, and Michaelis dates it in

51 or 52, and Lardner in 56; but Horne and Tomline in 65, and Scott in 66. The authorship of Paul is generally conceded. It is claimed in the first chapter. Titus was a Gentile, a Greek: Gal. ii., 3. He was never circumcised. The reason why Paul did not circumcise him was that it was demanded and insisted on as a thing obligatory: Gal. ii., 1-5. Titus was greatly trusted and loved by Paul, who calls him "mine own son after the common faith:" Titus i., 4. See 2 Cor. ii., 13; vii., 6, 13. Titus was an excellent minister, of good judgment, of great zeal and prudence, and in possession of the high confidence of Paul: 2 Cor. viii., 6, 16, 23. Titus was at the Council at Jerusalem. Compare Acts xv., 2; Gal. ii., 1. Having rendered various important services to the churches, particularly to the Church at Corinth, Paul left him in Crete, to complete arrangements for the orderly and edifying management of those churches: Titus i., 5. This was strong proof of the confidence Paul had in this Greek. Crete, now bearing the name of Candia, is an island in the Mediterranean, famous as far back as the days of Homer for its hundred cities. It seems incredible that all these should have been large towns. Many of them were probably mere villages. The Cretans were rather famous in archery, and in navigating ships; but they were infamous for three great vices—lying, fierceness, and gluttony: Titus i., 12. Their lying and deceitfulness had grown into a proverb. Epimenides, one of their own poets, who flourished in the sixth century before Christ, and who is by Plato called a "divine man," and by Plutarch a "friend of God," declares they were always liars. Paul says this testimony was true. Six centuries made no change for the better on this people, till the Gospel came to them in power. Not only did many difficulties arise from the bad character and habits of the people, but there were there many Jews, as Philo informs us.

Many of these, in apostolic times, greatly troubled the churches with their old notions. In Paul's day, Greece was divided into two parts, Achaia and Macedonia. The subscription says this epistle was written from Nicopolis, which was in Macedonia. This may or may not be so. This epistle has the same peculiarities of style found in the First Epistle to Timothy.

The Second Epistle to Timothy was pretty certainly the last of Paul's fourteen epistles. It is true that Lardner dates it in 61; but he stands alone in this view. Horne and Tomline date it in 65; the authorized version, Michaelis, and Lloyd, in 66; Benson, Macknight, Paley, Clarke, and Rosenmüller think it was written shortly before Paul suffered martyrdom. Now Paul was beheaded under Nero, and Nero died in June, 68. It is probable that Scott, who dates it in 67, or Pearson, who dates it in 68, is more nearly correct than any of those whose views have been given above. The great object of this epistle seems to be to embolden Timothy for a day of persecution. Whether Timothy felt the effects of the rage of the wicked about to be let loose is not certain. Neither do we know whether Timothy reached Paul before the apostle was beheaded.

All these epistles prove the truth of Christianity. No impostor would write such letters to his private friend. And they are all replete with weighty truth.

Besides the commentators who have written on all the New Testament, a minister may, with advantage, consult the critical and grammatical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, by Dr. Charles J. Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. Of course, the reader will find leanings and prejudices arising from his Church relations; but the work has merits which throw these faults into the background.

Besides the Pastoral Epistles, we find here and there in



all the sacred writings, especially in the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, many great and solemn truths, suited to guide the man of God in the path of duty.

Of course, such great matters as are involved in Pastoral Theology have not escaped the notice of good men in past ages. Among the early fathers of the Church, Chrysostom, Cyprian, and Augustine have said many good things on this subject. The same is true of the Reformers. But we find the best thoughts of fathers and Reformers in their commentaries, their letters to friends, or in their writings on other subjects, rather than in formal treatises on the general subject.

In later times we have Ostervald's Lectures on the Sacred Ministry; *De Pastore evangelico*, by Oliver Bowles, published about the middle of the seventeenth century; Gerhard's Pastoral Care; Gibbon's Christian Minister; George Herbert's Country Parson; Mason's Student and Pastor; Burnet's Pastoral Care; Baxter's Reformed Pastor; and Job Orton's Letters to a Young Clergyman. Then we have the works of Watts, Willison, Doddridge, Flavel, and a host of good writers of that class, and of Cecil, Dwight, Hall, Ryland, Fuller, and others of a later date. James's Earnest Ministry is no mean book. The Pulpit Cyclopædia has a collection of many good things; but beware of its skeletons of sermons. Smith, on The Sacred Office, is eloquent. The Education Annuals had considerable merit. Dr. Van Rensselaer's Home, the School, and the Church may be consulted with advantage. The Preacher's Manual, issued by the Methodist Book Concern, must be of great value to a young Methodist preacher, and will reward any good man for reading it. Spring's Power of the Pulpit is a capital thing in its way. The most massive work extant on this subject is Dr. Cannon's Pastoral Theology, issued since his death. It is quite

full, and very judicious. Still later, we have, in a popular form, the contributions to this branch of knowledge by Dr. James W. Alexander, and by Dr. Nicholas Murray. Then we have the Pastoral Office, by Rev. Ashton Oxenden; *Ad Clerum: Advices to a Young Preacher*, by Dr. Joseph Parker; *The Office and Work of the Christian Ministry*, by Professor Hoppin, of Yale College; etc., etc.

Very valuable thoughts on this subject may be found in the Lives of Philip Henry, David Brainerd, Henry Martyn, George Whitefield, John Henry Livingston, Archibald Alexander, Ebenezer Porter, David Abeel, McCheyne, etc., etc.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MINISTRY.

EVERY tribe of the human family has had some form of religion. And every form of religion has had its ministers, whose office it was to disseminate its tenets and celebrate its rites. Before the days of Moses, those who knew God, and were his ministers, were the heads of families. Under the law, all the males of thirty years old and upward in the tribe of Levi, who were qualified, were set apart to the sacred service. These were priests, offering sacrifices, making intercession, and blessing the people. In Israel, those who by revelation made known the will of God were called seers or prophets. Those who expounded the Mosaic institute were called, in our New Testament times, lawyers. Those who gave extracts from the law, or copies of the Scripture, were called scribes. A man might be a prophet who did not belong to the tribe of Levi; but every priest must be a Levite by descent. It was always the duty of the priests to give instruction to the people. It was expressly provided that "the priest's lips should keep knowledge," and that the people "should seek the law at his mouth." Mal. ii., 7.

Under the Gospel, Jesus Christ tenderly regarding the wants of his Church, "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Eph. iv., 11, 12. Some of the offices here mentioned have long since ceased. The occasion that called for them has passed



away. The prophets of our day are mere preachers of truths already revealed. Nor are there in our time any, who hold the apostolic office. That was confined to those who had personally seen the Lord Jesus, and were endowed with miraculous gifts. These were the signs of an apostle. Whateley says, "Successors the apostles had none." But Christ still has a ministry on earth, and has ordained that it shall be continued to the end of the world. The great commission under which God's ministers preach, is proof of this: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xxviii., 19, 20. As long as men are ignorant, they need instruction. As long as they are out of the way, they require guidance. As long as God has a people on earth, they must be built up in faith, and have the comforts of love. The perpetuity of the sacred office is very clear.

As right views of the ministry ought every where to be held, let us look a little at the importance of the sacred office. It is high. It is of great value. No other office on earth can compare with it in dignity. But let not this remark be misunderstood. For,

1. Ministers have no right to lord it over men's consciences, to announce any truths, or prescribe any rules for the government of men's faith or practice, unless they have warrant from Scripture for so doing. The office of the Gospel minister is not created for the advantage of those who hold it. Nor can any herald of salvation bind the consciences of men by any wisdom or authority of his own. His teachings are only ministerial and declarative. The moment he utters sentiments, and inculcates practices not founded in the Word of God, he transcends his commis-

sion. His words are then of no binding force. It is his office, not to make laws, but to proclaim those given by the Head of the Church; not to invent doctrines by the power of his own genius, but to study and set forth those proposed in Scripture. Both for himself and his brethren, Paul declared: "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." 2 Cor. i., 24.

2. As a minister of Christ is not allowed to be a lord over the church, so neither may he domineer over his brethren in the sacred office. It is highly arrogant and very wicked for any mortal to claim spiritual authority over Christ's ministers. The Lord himself settled this matter: "Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles have dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister" [or servant]. Matt. xx., 25-27. Such a Scripture cuts up by the roots all the lordly pretensions of one minister of Christ over others.

3. Nor does the sacred office confer any right or power to control any matter beyond its own prescribed functions. It invests no one with a right to manage or direct civil or political affairs. Personally, ministers are citizens, and, like others, they have a right to their own opinions, and to the exercise of all their franchises; but their office is confined to sacred things.

4. Nor does the ministry invest any one with a personal worthiness beyond what he otherwise possesses. His sins are no less truly sins, his virtues are no more truly virtues, than if he were a private person. Official sanctity is no substitute for personal holiness.

Notwithstanding all these things, the ministry of the Gospel is very full of dignity and importance. It is the highest office on earth. To forsake it for any other office,



however exalted, is a sad fall from honor. To one who solicited a civil appointment at his hand, Andrew Jackson said: "As a minister of the Gospel you already hold an office much higher than any in my gift or in my possession. If you shall be able to give a good account of that, it will be as much as could be expected of any man." The old President was right.

Let us notice a few particulars:

I. The names and titles given to God's ministers evince the high character of their office. They are about fifty times called *men of God*. This language is found in both Testaments. Others are men of war, men of the world, men of science, men of authority, fathers, or brethren; but a minister of the Gospel is a *man of God*. His office is conferred by God. His work is in the things of God. For its success he is wholly dependent on the special blessing of God. Rightly performed, its duties directly advance the glory of God.

Sometimes ministers of God's Word are called *angels*, or messengers. Their errands are errands of mercy. They go on God's business, not their own. They get all their authority from Heaven. They deliver the messages sent by their Master to a lost world.

"Ye who your Lord's commission bear,  
His way of mercy to prepare—  
Angels he calls you: be your strife  
To lead on earth an angel's life.  
Think not of rest: though dreams be sweet,  
Start up, and ply your heavenward feet.  
Is not God's oath upon your head,  
Ne'er to sink back on slothful bed?  
Never again your loins untie,  
Nor let your torches waste and die,  
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,  
Ye hear your Master's midnight call."

Ministers are also called shepherds, or pastors. This was a title given to kings and heads of nations. Except among the Egyptians, it seems always to have been a mark of high respect. God claims it as honorable to himself. He is the Shepherd of Israel, who leads Joseph like a flock. This is one of the titles of Christ. He is "the chief Shepherd," "the good Shepherd," "the one Shepherd." Under him his ministers feed the flock, watch over it, and care for it.

Ministers are also called *bishops*, or, as the word is rendered in Acts xx, 28, overseers. It is the great business of God's ministers to oversee the people of God, to guard them against foes and dangers. This title is so excellent that "the apostle of the circumcision" applies it to Christ, calling him the Shepherd and Bishop of souls: 1 Pet. ii., 25.

Ministers are also called watchmen. They are placed on the walls and towers of Zion to keep the city of God. They are to look out, and give notice of the approach of enemies. They must give the alarm when any danger impends. They are set to this work by God himself. If they betray their trust, men will perish, and their blood will be required of the unfaithful men who ought to have sounded the trumpet.

Ministers are also *embassadors* for Christ. He has sent them to offer terms of peace to rebellious men. If faithful to God and to the souls of men, they deserve great honor, and shall surely receive it. They plead the cause of him who is the God of the whole earth, yes, the God of heaven. The sovereign authority of the universe gives them their commission. It is signed and sealed by the King of kings.

In like manner all the titles of God's ministers indicate the honorableness and greatness of their work.

Bishop Ken thus sums up a reference to most of these titles :

“Give me the priest whose graces shall possess  
 Of an *embassador* the just address;  
 A *father's* tenderness; a *shepherd's* care;  
 A *leader's* courage, which the cross can bear;  
 A *ruler's* awe; a *watchman's* wakeful eye;  
 A *fisher's* patience, and a *laborer's* toil;  
 A *guide's* dexterity to disembroil;  
 A *prophet's* inspiration from above;  
 A *teacher's* knowledge, and a Saviour's love.”

h. B.

II. All the accounts given us in Scripture concerning the nature of a minister's work lead us to high conceptions of the greatness and importance of the office he holds. Preachers and pastors are sent forth by him who is self-existent, and independent of all powers, of all worlds. His throne has stood from eternity. He is from everlasting to everlasting. He is sovereign of the blazing universe above and around us. His throne is spotless. He is infinitely excellent. And he sends his servants to tell us who he is, what is his will, and what are his laws. In its wickedness this world looks upon the character of God either as contemptible or unamiable. Nor without the lamp of truth held up by God's ministers have the mass of men ever had just thoughts of God. Without instruction, the human mind is soon lost in fears or conceits. If there is a God, his character must be the most interesting of all themes of inquiry. To teach the knowledge of God is the first great business of the minister of Christ. ✓

Another great design of the ministry is to hold forth just sentiments respecting the government of God. Is it universal? is it particular? is it supreme? is it good? is it perfect? Untaught by God, man can not satisfactorily answer these questions. He finds himself in a world where



troubles roll over him like waves of the sea. What do these mean? Are they tokens of wrath? Are they fatherly chastisements? Will they work for good? or are they precursors of ruin? None can tell except as light is poured on these matters by the Word of God, and, commonly, as that Word is held forth by a living ministry.

Nor can we any where but in the Christian doctrine find the true theory of human nature. Are we immortal? or shall we perish like the brutes? Are we accountable? if so, to whom? to what extent? and on what principles? Are we fallen and sinful? or are we pure and upright? If we are sinners, are we forever and irretrievably lost? or is a remedy provided? if so, what is that remedy? These are inquiries on which every thinking man feels that he needs light. Nor has any untaught mind ever reached correct knowledge on these subjects, though many have indulged conjectures. The best discoveries of guilt and misery among men seem to have led to nothing but hopeless sorrow.

Some may say that all these matters are revealed in Scripture, and that it is enough to give men the printed Word of God, and so quite do away with the ministry of reconciliation.

In answer, it may be said: 1. God has ordained otherwise. He says, "Preach the Gospel to every creature." His plan is by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. All God's counsels are wisdom and mercy, love and faithfulness. In the end it will be found best to submit to every appointment of Heaven. 2. Many, whose souls are worth as much as those of the learned, can not read the Word of God, even when translated into their native language. Sometimes there are wicked laws, which hinder or discourage the perusal of Scripture. Many can not read, and have no one to teach them that useful art.

Others, who have some opportunities to learn, do not embrace them. And many, who can read a little, do it so badly that they have no pleasure in it, and so do not profit withal. 3. Every man knows how much more we are affected by what we hear well spoken than by what we read. By far the greater amount of human knowledge is transmitted orally. Even so faith comes by hearing the Word of God. What man, having life, liberty, property, or reputation at stake, would consent that his prosecutor should orally address the court and jury, while his advocate should defend him only by writings put into the hands of those who were to decide in his case? The written defense may be very able, learned, and ingenious; yet every wise man would wish to have it impressively delivered. So the momentous truths of religion commonly have their greatest effect when solemnly preached to men. The Scriptures are indeed excellent. To search them is a commanded and a profitable duty. Yet observation shows that where God's Word is most abundantly preached, there it is most laboriously studied in private; and that where there are few or no preachers, there the Bible falls into general neglect. 4. Moreover, God has long and greatly blessed the preaching of his Word to the awakening, enlightening, conversion, sanctification, and comfort of his people. In Scripture, many narratives show how abundantly God has honored this means in leading souls to Christ. In every age the living teacher has been God's chief instrument for bringing to the fold of Christ the lost sheep. Candid men will not deny this.

In these general views, many of the best and wisest men have expressed concurrence—thus:

“Where there is no vision the people perish.”—*Solomon*.

“I magnify mine office.”—*Paul*.

“The minister is then in the very height of his dignity,

when from the pulpit he feeds the Lord's flock with sacred doctrine."—*Erasmus*.

"The pulpit is our main battle-field. There we win triumphs or sustain defeats. The angels have not such a throne."—*Law*.

"The work of the ministry must be acknowledged by all who believe the truths of revelation, and hope for happiness beyond the grave, to be the most important in which a human being can possibly engage."—*Coke*.

"The work of the ministry is the most momentous and excellent in which a mortal man can engage, and one which no man who has a just impression of its nature and consequences will lightly think of undertaking."—*Gunn*.

"The greatest preferment under heaven is to be an able, painful, successful, suffering, cast-out minister of the New Testament."—*Whitefield*.

"He bore his great commission in his look,  
 But sweetly tempered, awed, and softened all he spoke.  
 He preached the joys of heaven and pains of hell,  
 And warned the sinner with becoming zeal;  
 But on eternal mercy loved to dwell.  
 He taught the Gospel rather than the law;  
 And forced himself to drive, but loved to draw. ✓  
 For fear but frightens minds; but love, like heat,  
 Exhales the soul sublime, to seek her native seat.  
 To threats the stubborn sinner oft is hard,  
 Wrapt in his crimes, against the storm prepared;  
 But when the milder beams of mercy play,  
 He melts, and throws his cumbrous cloak away.  
 Lightnings and thunder (heaven's artillery),  
 As harbingers, before the Almighty fly;  
 Those but proclaim his style, and disappear;  
 The stiller sound succeeds, and God is there!"—*Chaucer*.

"The pulpit (in the sober use  
 Of its legitimate, peculiar pow'rs)  
 Must stand acknowledged, while the world shall stand,



The most important and effectual guard, ✓  
Support, and ornament of virtue's cause.  
There stands the messenger of truth—there stands  
The legate of the skies! His theme divine,  
His office sacred, his credentials clear—  
By him the violated law speaks out  
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet  
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.  
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,  
Reclaims the wand'rer, binds the broken heart,  
And, armed himself in panoply complete  
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms  
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule  
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,  
The sacramental host of God's elect!"—*Cowper*.

## CHAPTER III.

### A CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

It is easy to state, but difficult to apply, the true doctrine respecting a call to the sacred office. We must state principles with all possible clearness. If men abuse them, it is their fault. Human weakness and depravity are seldom more manifest than respecting men's duty as to the ministry. Timidity and rashness, fear of man and love of the world, voluntary humility and undue forwardness, all at times bear on men's decisions in this matter.

These things can all be maintained:

I. All men are not called to the sacred office. All are bound to glorify God and serve their generation. But all are not bound to preach the Gospel.

II. God alone can call any man into the ministry. This is a divine prerogative. No sovereign would allow another to appoint his ministers. The sovereign of the universe calls to him whom he will. Christ is the head of the Church. Law: "Our commission is not of man; the ceremonial of the Church accredits, but the anointing of the Spirit designates."

III. The greater part of mankind are not called. Half of the human family are females. "I suffer not a woman to teach." 1 Tim. ii., 12. Nor is any wicked man called to the sacred office. The Scripture is clear. Psal. l., 16. Nor is any young convert, who has not had time to learn by study and experience, called at this time to enter on the duties of the ministry. 1 Tim. iii., 6. Nor is any one who has been guilty of infamous crimes called to this holy



work. 1 Tim. iii., 2. "The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted." Psa. xii., 8. One of the great sins of Jeroboam was that he dared to make priests of others than Levites. The second was like unto it: He took of the lowest of the people for this high office. Thus he ruined all his prospects. 1 Kings xii., 31; xiii., 33, 34. Neither are all men of good name and good talents called to the ministry. There is as real need of good men in all the offices and stations of life as in this holy work.

IV. The Scriptures do in many ways require that every minister in God's house shall be called to his office by the Lord. The passages relied on for proof are such as these: Numb. xviii., 7; Deut. xviii., 20; Isa. vi., 8; xi., 2, 3; lxi., 1-3; Jer. i., 4-19; xxiii., 30, 32; Ezek. xiii., 3; Matt. iv., 18-20; Acts xiii., 2; Rom. i., 1; 1 Cor. i., 1; Tit. i., 6; Heb. v., 4. The language of some of these places is exceedingly clear, and very alarming to intruders into sacred functions. Here are the words of some of them: "I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death;" "The prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, shall die;" "Behold, I am against the prophets that steal my words;" "Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing;" "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them;" "No man taketh this honor to himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." The Most High would not allow even the mechanical work of the Tabernacle to be done by any one until he had "called Bezaleel, and filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to

work in all manner of workmanship." Surely, then, he would not have men enter on the most delicate and difficult work in the world without his Holy Spirit.

V. The judgment of the fathers of the Church in past ages fully coincides with these teachings of Scripture. Luther solemnly warns men, whatever their attainments in learning and wisdom, never to enter the ministry unless called of God. Vinet says, "We must be called of God . . . Whether external or internal, the call ought to be divine." The Church of England requires an affirmative answer to this solemn question: "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God for the promoting of his glory and the edifying of his people?" Burnet well says: "Certainly the answer that is made ought to be well considered; for if any says, 'I trust so,' that yet knows nothing of any such motive, and can give no account of it, he lies to the Holy Ghost, and makes his first approach to the altar with a lie in his mouth, and that not unto men, but unto God."

It is a mighty stay to a good man, in the midst of the toils and trials of the ministry, to know that he is moved by God, and that so he has the full comfort of all the promises made to such as obey the heavenly calling. It is always safe to stand in our lot, and do and suffer the whole will of God.

VI. It is a great and undeserved honor to be put into the sacred office. Paul says: "To me is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Eph. iii., 8. No man deserves to be a minister of the Lord Jesus. Such an honor is far—yea, infinitely—above the merits of any living man.

VII. Yet great as is this honor, it does not puff up a good man. In the same connection in which Paul speaks

of the favor thus shown him, he says he is "less than the least of all saints." In fact, every man of sense and piety knows that, in the government and edification of the Church, God often "chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, and the things that are not, hath he chosen to bring to naught the things that are, that no flesh might glory in his presence." This treasure is in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of men. 1 Cor. i., 27-29; 2 Cor. iv., 7.

VIII. It can not be safely denied that bad men, some very bad men, have entered the ministry of the Gospel. Such are noticed in the New Testament. Such are found in more modern times. Some such have discovered and bewailed their error. Hear Scott, the commentator, as he tells what first led him into the ministry: "My views, as far as I can ascertain them, were these three: a desire of a less laborious and more comfortable way of procuring a livelihood than otherwise I had the prospect of; the expectation of more leisure to employ in reading, of which I was inordinately fond; and a proud conceit of my abilities, with a vain-glorious imagination that I should some time distinguish and advance myself in the literary world. These were my ruling motives in taking this bold step—motives as opposite to those which should influence men to enter this sacred office as pride is opposite to humility, ambition to contentment in a low estate, and a willingness to be the least of all, and the servant of all; as opposite as the love of self, of the world, of filthy lucre, and slothful ease, is to the love of God, of souls, and of the laborious work of the ministry. To me, therefore, be the shame of this hateful sin, and to God be all the glory for overruling it for good!" The history of the early part of the life of



✓ Chalmers contains an awful warning to men not to enter the ministry from secular motives.

IX. What, then, is a call to the sacred office? A call may be extraordinary and miraculous, like that of Paul; or ordinary, as is that of all God's ministers since the days of miracles. An ordinary call may be as clear and satisfactory as one accompanied by a great wonder. The ordinary call is general, arising from the wants and necessities of millions of dying men; or special, making it clear to an individual that it is his duty to serve God and his generation by becoming a herald of salvation. A special call to the ministry is such a concurrence of qualities and events ✓ in an individual, as, if explained by the principles of the Bible and of common-sense, will manifest the will of God that that individual should enter the ministry. In determining whether one be thus specially called, both the Word and providence of God must be duly regarded as they explain each other, and as they unitedly shed light on this subject.

1. The first element of a call is a strong and abiding desire for the work, springing from a supreme love to Christ. So says Paul: "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." 1 Tim. iii., 1. ✓ The first verb here rendered *desire* expresses both eagerness and fixedness of mind. If the desire for the ministry is faint, the trials to be endured will soon overcome it. If it is not a fixed inclination of the mind, it will soon give way without any great trial. The ministry is a life-work. The love of it must be life-long. This desire must be not for the honor, the leisure, or the ease of the office, but for *the work* belonging to it, with the joys and sorrows, pains and pleasures, labors and comforts attending a conscientious discharge of its duties.

2. Another element of a call is a deep and abiding sense

of personal weakness and unworthiness. He who feels aright in view of the difficulties and responsibilities of the work, must with Paul say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" This sense of weakness has made many good men tremble and shrink at the thought of entering the ministry. When God told Jeremiah that he had "ordained him a prophet," that good man said, "Ah, Lord God, I can not speak, for I am a child." But God gave him the assurance of all needed strength and succor. On that he rested and went forward. So when Christ called the persecutor of Tarsus, he knew what difficulties he would have from his past life and in his future labors, and he personally said to him: "Rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Paul never forgot this interview. He quoted these words in his old age. They made him calm and firm before the cruel and the mighty. But for them he had fallen at the threshold. His sense of personal weakness and unworthiness never left him. Indeed, it grew upon him all his life. At one time he says, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not worthy to be called an apostle." Later in life he says, "I am less than the least of all saints." Still later in life, as he was nearing his eternal home, he cries, "I am the chief of sinners." Compare 1 Cor. xv., 9; Eph. iii., 8; 1 Tim. i., 15. In like manner, it might be shown how Chrysostom, Augustine, Calvin, Knox, and others trembled at the thought of living

under the awful responsibilities of the ministry. On the day of his ordination, Philip Henry meekly wrote: "I did J this day receive so much honor and work as ever I shall know what to do with. Lord Jesus, proportion supplies accordingly." The better men are fitted for this great work, the deeper is their sense of unfitness and unworthiness.

3. One part of a call is a comfortable persuasion that, weak and unworthy as we are, we may yet hope for needed grace and strength. So God said to the weeping prophet: "Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee shalt thou speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee." Jer. i., 7, 8. The young prophet objected no more. To such pleasing hope and confidence the great apostle alludes: "And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward; not that we are sufficient as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament." 2 Cor. iii., 4-6. God sends not any man on a warfare at his own charges. He can cause the "worm Jacob" to "thresh the mountains." He can make the feeble as David. When we are strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, and are sure that as our days, so shall our strength be, we need have no tormenting fears. This is one of the grand victories of faith.

J 4. Kindred to the foregoing is a high estimate of the office itself, and of its appropriate labors, pleasures, and consolations. He is not fit for the ministry who can not find in its peculiar duties and enjoyments a satisfaction which he can not find in any other employment. Paul says the ministry is "a good work." He honored his own calling. Luther says, "When I was but a young divine, methought Paul did unwisely in glorying so oft of his



calling in all his epistles; but I did not understand his purpose, for I knew not that the ministry of God's Word was so weighty a matter." He who regards any other calling as comparable to the sacred office will probably soon turn aside to something else. At least, he will have but a dull time in pretending to perform the self-denying duties of a Gospel minister. It is not easy for any man to esteem too highly the privilege of being a herald of salvation. Brown, of Haddington, says: "Now, after forty years' preaching of Christ, and his great and sweet salvation, I think I would rather beg my bread all the laboring days of the week, for the opportunity of publishing the Gospel on the Sabbath to an assembly of sinful men, than, without such a privilege, enjoy the richest possessions on earth. By the Gospel do men live, and in it is the life of my soul." There is no human comforter like the able, skillful minister. There is no light like that which he is authorized to pour on the darkness of our path. There are no glories like those to which he points and invites us. There are no victories like those which he achieves. T. Adam says: "A poor country parson, fighting against the devil in his parish, has nobler ideas than Alexander had." When a man voluntarily quits the ministry for any secular office or honors, it is as if the king of a great people had laid aside his sceptre for a constable's mace. From a just estimate of the ministry naturally flows a hearty devotion to it. At his ordination, George Herbert writes: "I will consecrate all my learning, and all my poor abilities, to advance the glory of that God that gave them, knowing that I can never do too much for him that hath done so much for me as to make me a Christian; and *I will labor to be like my Saviour*, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men, and by following the merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus."

5. Another part of a call to the ministry is the possession of the necessary learning and power of explaining and enforcing truth, or the means and desire of acquiring them. No man is called to teach what he does not know, and can not or will not learn. To pretend the contrary is unreasonable. Unless men have the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and of might, of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, they can not in any measure be such ministers as their Master was, or as he desires. Isa. xi., 2-3. One of very limited knowledge of divine things may be called to prepare for the great work of this holy calling. This, in fact, was the call of the four fishermen, mentioned in Matt. iv., 18-20: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," said Christ to two of them. The history of the other two shows their call to have been similar.

There is no dispensing with such qualifications as these in all who fill the sacred office: viz., an experimental acquaintance with the truths of Scripture. The Christian character must be somewhat matured. There must be consistency and harmony in the personal piety of the candidate. There must be capacity for teaching and guiding others. It is only "the words of the wise that are as goads." Carnal policy is no substitute for heavenly skill. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" God's ministers must indeed be harmless as doves, but they must be wise as serpents. Matt. x., 16. Religious teachers must have knowledge, not only of some elementary truths, but of the system of doctrine and morals contained in God's Word. How, when, or where such knowledge is gained is a matter of little moment. It must be accurate, and not consist of vague notions. It must be sound and scriptural: Jer. xxiii., 28. It must also be extensive: Matt. xiii., 52; Col. i., 9; ii., 2; 2 Tim. ii., 7; iii.,



16, 17. A minister must also possess the power of communicating knowledge in such a way as is likely to promote the great objects of preaching, viz., the enlightening, conviction, conversion, and edification of souls. The truth must be spoken, and it must be spoken fitly. One must be able to teach and persuade by a right use of the knowledge of truth in his possession. It is a great thing when the guides of God's people have "understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." 1 Chron. xii., 32. ✓

6. The consent and approval of God's people seem to be required to the full completion of a call to fill any office in the house of God in ordinary times, and in a settled state of the Church. The apostles would not even ordain deacons to distribute alms to widows and the poor until the Church had chosen them to this end. Acts vi., 1-6. This Scripture evinces that the popular election and the consent of the ordaining authorities should concur before one can be duly invested with the humblest ecclesiastical function. This choice of the people and consent of the ordaining power of course refer to ordinary times. Nor should men be offended because there seems to be a tardiness in the Church and her ministers to encourage one to go forward. Milne, the missionary to China, offered to go as a servant to the other members of the mission before the Church began to see his great character. John Newton would have been quite borne down by the number and weight of his duties if he had not been held back by an unpleasant and perhaps unkind delay of several months. Let not young men be impatient. If they are called of God, he will in due time incline his people to think so. ✓

7. To the foregoing must be added those leadings of Providence which throw light on Scripture as well as receive light from it. These are many. They differ vastly in various cases. But commonly they relate to the removal

of entangling hinderances in our way, to hedging up our way in other courses, to sending afflictions, which cut us off from pursuits which seemed to be proper, and to giving the means and opportunity of gaining the knowledge, skill, and experience requisite to the right performance of the duties of the ministry. In rightly interpreting Providence, it is very important to judge nothing before the time. God's people are led in a way they know not. It is not given to mortals to see far before them. We must learn to stand still if we would see the salvation of the Lord. Difficulties are often designed to test us, and to show what manner of spirit we are of, and how excellent and wonderful is God in counsel and in working.

8. The last thing necessary to a call is a conviction of duty. This is more than the absence of a conviction to the contrary. In the case of Paul this sense of duty was overpowering. His language is strong: "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood;" "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision;" "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel." Gal. i., 16; Acts xxvi., 19; 1 Cor. ix., 16. Paul's conviction was very strong, perhaps stronger than that of most men at their first entrance on their office. Our sense of obligation may not be as strong, but it must be real and controlling. If genuine, it will gain strength by time and trials. Blessed is he who has a tender conscience, and yet a prevailing conviction that he is called of God to publish salvation.

It would be easy to show that none of these elements of a call could be omitted without impairing its force and strength.

Two remarks conclude this chapter. One is, that even a good man may mistake his calling, and may enter the sacred office when he does not thereby please God. He is

then in a false position all his days. He may maintain a decent appearance, but he can not be a happy or a useful man. He is greatly to be pitied ; perhaps he is greatly to be blamed. Another remark is, that it is very dangerous to resist God's call to preach his Word and feed his flock. See how the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, when he hesitated to accept the office to which God called him. *Exod. iv., 14.* "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker." *Isa. xlv., 9.* Remember Jonah!

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CHARACTER OF A TRUE MINISTER.

THE world over, men form their estimates of religion by the character of its ministers. If the spiritual guides of any people are ignorant, vicious, or debased, the effect is seen every where. "Like priest, like people," is no unfair rule of judgment. When the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and the people love to have it so, no mortal can tell what is coming. Jer. v., 31. Ruin then stares the people in the face. No wise man will contend that every fault in character is equally glaring, or that every good quality is equally valuable. And yet all that is good is desirable, and all that is bad should be shunned. In painting, "trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle." In an important sense, the same is true in ministerial character. Many have sketched the character of a good pastor and preacher. The sweet poet of Olney has well done this part of his "Task :—"

"Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,  
Were he on earth, would hear, approve, and own,  
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace  
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.  
I would express him simple, grave, sincere ;  
In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain,  
And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,  
And natural in gesture ; much impressed  
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds  
May feel it too ; affectionate in look,  
And tender in address, as well becomes  
A messenger of grace to guilty men."—*Cowper*.



Nothing is unimportant if it makes a minister more or less useful than he otherwise would be. ✓

It is truly important that a minister be neat and tidy in his person and habits. We may not say that "cleanliness is next to godliness;" but we may say that filthy habits please and profit no one, while they repel and offend many. Sometimes in the sick-room ministers have such bad odors about their breath and clothing that they are of necessity invited to retire. Filthiness of person is of good report nowhere.

A minister should be punctual. He should keep all his pledges and promises, whether to meet a friend, a committee, or congregation, or to pay a debt. When you lead one or many to expect that you will do a thing at a given time, do it then, and not five minutes or five days later.

A minister should be grave; not a buffoon, not a jester, not a trifler. Chalmers says: "How little must the presence of God be felt in that place where the high functions of the pulpit are degraded into a stipulated exchange of entertainment on one side, and of admiration on the other; and surely it were a sight to make angels weep, when a weak, vamping mortal, surrounded by his fellow-sinners, and hastening to the judgment along with them, finds it a dearer object to his bosom to regale his hearers by the exhibition of himself, than to do in plain earnest the work of his Master, and urge the business of repentance and faith by the impressive simplicity of the Gospel." Levity ✓  
ill becomes him whose business concerns men's souls. To be the best fun-maker in a company is no credit to a clergyman.

Yet gravity should not descend to sourness or moroseness. Christian ministers ought to be both hopeful and cheerful. Men ought to seek such changes as will make them buoyant. Livingston says: "The country air, the

new amusements, and the caresses of near relations, have refreshed soul and body. I feel cheerful and hearty, and am convinced that it is necessary sedentary persons should now and then take tours." Let ministers hope against hope, and never be discouraged while they have a gracious God, a precious Saviour, a divine Comforter, and a covenant full of unfailing promises.

✓ A minister should be industrious. In the sacred office nothing can excuse laziness. Sloth is a reproach to any one, but in a clergyman it is an odious vice. We have a right to hope that God will bless our honest endeavors; but where has he promised to bless our laziness? Parker says: "A terrible malediction awaits the indolent minister." Never murder time, or it will one day strike you to the heart. The true spirit of a minister is a spirit of toil. No marvel that the apostle said to his young friend Timothy: "Preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine; watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry; meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them." This is a mere sample of the urgent terms in which one aged apostolic minister would arouse in a young servant of Christ the spirit of diligence. Whatever health or energy any minister possesses, let him joyfully lay all on the altar of God.

A Gospel minister must also be prudent. For this there is no substitute. Imprudence is manifest in the formation of unprofitable intimacies, especially with such as can have no congeniality with us; in the rash and foolish use of the tongue, and in intercourse with females. One of the good rules given to young Methodist preachers is: "Converse sparingly and cautiously with women—particularly young women." No small part of human misery, and no small

part of clerical miscarriage, have their source in imprudence.

Prudence dwells with wisdom. "He that winneth souls is wise," must be wise, or he will not win many souls. It was because the Preacher was wise that he taught the people knowledge, and gave good heed, and sought out and set in order many proverbs. No work is so difficult as that of the servant of Christ. Gregory Nazianzen says: "The art of all arts, the science of all sciences, seems to me to be the art and science of directing men, the most varied of beings and the most changeable."

The Gospel minister must also practice self-denial. This is one of the first lessons of discipleship. He who has never learned it will be but a poor instructor of mankind. Wilson observes: "Notions of false dignity are as common as they are pernicious. Ambition, secular dominion, the 'lording it over God's heritage,' spiritual pride, are the gangrene of the Church." If we refuse the cross, we shall miss the crown. No man of God should be slow in learning to endure hardness. None should try to please himself. None should consult with flesh and blood. Perhaps it was Brainerd who said: "Formerly when I was sick, and wet, and cold, I comforted myself with thinking that I should reach a cabin, get food and medicine, and dry clothes; but now when I am sick, and wet, and cold, I have immediate comfort in the thought that thereby God is glorified." Let us practice self-denial until it becomes a habit and a delight. Then we can say as did Augustine: "Oh, how sweet it is to deny all sinful sweets; oh, how pleasant to forego all forbidden pleasures for Christ's sake."

A Gospel minister must also be kind. His heart should be full of love and pity to his fellow-men. Let it be his pleasure as well as his duty to succor the tempted, to com-



fort the feeble-minded, to raise the fallen, to bid the faint be strong. Payson writes: "I never seemed fit to say a word to a sinner, except when I had a broken heart myself; when I was subdued and melted into penitence, and felt as though I had received a pardon to my own soul, and when my heart was full of tenderness and pity." It is a saying at least fifteen hundred years old, "Love, and say what you please." Without such love the tenderest truths of the Gospel will seem cold and repulsive, and the severer truths of God's Word will sound harsh and forbidding.

Of course a minister must be a man of genuine and fervent piety. Else all his labors will be irksome and tedious. The Scripture is clear. "Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" Psa. l., 16. Without piety the best that can be expected will be a decent but heartless performance of the most sacred duties. When the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch. Of Levi, God says: "My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many from iniquity." Mal. ii., 5, 6. While success is not a duty but a blessing, and while no man is responsible for success but only for his faithfulness, and while even unconverted men may have some success in the ministry, yet generally God is pleased to own and bless the labors of his devoted, pious servants far more than those of graceless hypocrites. Indeed, the harm done to the cause of Christ by unconverted ministers far more than balances any good effected by their labors.

On the subject of personal piety, the address of J. Brown,



of Haddington, to his students, contains words as solemn and seasonable as any that have yet been written by an uninspired man. The whole paragraph is here inserted. Let it be solemnly pondered :

“See that ye be *real Christians* yourselves. I now more and more see that nothing less than *real, real* Christianity is fit to die with, and make an appearance before God. Are ye, then, indeed ‘*born again,*’ ‘*born from above,*’ ‘*born of the Spirit,*’ ‘*created in Christ Jesus, unto good works*’—‘*new creatures in Christ Jesus, having all old things passed away, and all things become new?*’ Are ye, indeed, the circumcision which ‘*worship God in the Spirit,*’ habitually reading, meditating, praying, preaching, conversing with your hearts, under the influence of the Holy Ghost? Have you ‘*no confidence in the flesh,*’ no confidence in your self-righteousness, your learning, your address, your care and diligence, your gifts and graces; but, being emptied of self in every form, are ‘*poor in spirit,*’ ‘*less than the least of all saints,*’ and the least of all God’s mercies; nay, the very ‘*chief of sinners*’ in your own sight? Has it pleased God ‘*to reveal his Son in you?*’ and to instruct you with a strong hand to ‘count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ’ as your Lord, and to ‘count them but dung, that you may win him and be found in him, not having your own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith;’ and to ‘know the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings,’ and to ‘press toward the mark for the prize of the calling of God in Christ Jesus?’ John iii., 3, 5, 6; Eph. ii., 10; 2 Cor. v., 17; Gal. vi., 15; Phil. iii., 3; Matt. v., 3; xvi., 24; Eph. iii., 8; Gen. xxxii., 10; 1 Tim. i., 15; Gal. i., 15, 16; Phil. iii., 7–14.

“If you be *graceless* preachers or ministers of the Gospel, how terrible is your condition! If you open your

Bible, the sentence of your redoubled damnation flashes into your conscience from every page. When you compose your sermon, you but draw up a tremendous indictment against yourselves. If you argue against or reprove other men's sins, you but aggravate your own. When you publish the holy law of God, you but add to your rebellion against it, and make it an awful witness against your treacherous dissimulation. If you announce its threatenings, and mention *hell* with all its insupportable torments, you but enfeoff yourselves in it, and serve yourselves heirs to it as the inheritance appointed you by the Almighty. When you speak of Christ and his excellences, fullness, love, and labors, it is but to trample him under your feet. If you take his covenant and Gospel into your mouth, it is but to profane them, and cast them forth to be trodden underfoot of men. If you talk of spiritual experiences, you but do despite to the Spirit of grace. When you commend the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and invite sinners to new-covenant fellowship with them, you but treacherously stab them under the fifth rib, betray them with a kiss, and from your heart cry, 'This is the heir, the God; come, let us kill him!' While you hold up the glass of God's law or Gospel to others, you turn its back to yourselves. The Gospel which ye preach to others is hid—is a savor of death unto death—to you, the veil remaining on your hearts, and the god of this world having blinded your minds. Without the saving, the heart-transforming knowledge of Christ and him crucified, all your knowledge is but an accursed *puffer-up*, and the murderer of your own souls. And unless the grace of God make *an uncommon stretch* to save you, how desperate is your condition! Perhaps no person under heaven bids more unlikely to be saved than a *graceless minister*—his conscience is so overcharged with guilt, so seared with a hot iron, and his heart

so hardened by the abuse of the Gospel. Alas, my dear pupils ! must all my instructions, all the strivings of the Holy Ghost, all your reading, all your meditations, all your sermons, all your evangelical principles, all your profession, all your prayers, as traps and snares, take and bind any of you hand and foot, that, as '*unprofitable servants,*' you may be cast into *utter darkness*, with all the contents of your Bible and other books, all your gifts and apparent-like graces, as it were, inlaid in your consciences, that, like fuel or oil, they may forever feed the flames of God's wrath upon your souls ! After being set for a time at the gate of heaven, to point others into it, after prophesying in Christ's name, and wasting yourselves to show others the way of salvation, and to light up the friends of our Redeemer to their heavenly rest, must your own lamp go out in everlasting darkness, and ye be bidden, '*Depart from me, I never knew you, ye workers of iniquity !*' Must I, must all the churches, behold you at last brought forth and condemned as arch-traitors to our Redeemer ? Must you, in the most tremendous manner, forever sink into the bottomless pit, under the weight of the blood of the great God our Saviour, under the weight of murdered truths, murdered convictions, murdered gifts, murdered ministrations of the Gospel, and murdered souls of men !"



## CHAPTER V.

### BENEFITS OF GENUINE PIETY.

GODLINESS is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. To none is it more fruitful of good than to the devoted minister of Christ. It is his solace and his stay. It helps him in his own soul, in his labors, in his study, in his pulpit, before the Church, and before the world. Such piety as the Scripture calls for will be accompanied with genuine zeal. It will avail itself of every opportunity to do good. It will be keen and earnest in its quest of occasions for glorifying God. One who was a trifler and an impostor called to see Dr. Livingston. The good man was polite and faithful, and by the truth reached the conscience of even the deceitful man, and brought him to repentance.

Such piety will make men charitable in every good sense of that abused word. It will lead one to think no evil, and to speak evil of no one. Men whose thoughts are as kind as they ought to be, seldom if ever find themselves involved in trouble by rash or harsh censuring. Feeling right, one is apt to speak and act right.

Such piety will give all that important knowledge which we derive from an experience of the things of God in the soul. For it there is no substitute. Oxenden says: "Who can say with what power those truths will come from our lips which have been prayed over on our knees in secret, when all that they condemn in ourselves has been lamented, and when all that they teach has been attempted in our own life?" Universal Christian experience is the result of



the work and truth of God's Spirit on the heart of his people. Whatever is contrary to the experience of God's people is not true.

Such piety as the Bible calls for will make ministers men of prayer. Thus the feeble among them shall be as David. Without prayer the strongest is a poor, feeble worm, powerless for good. So necessary was prayer in the eyes of the apostles that they no more dared to pretermitt it than they dared to cease preaching. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." Acts vi., 4. And prayer that is heartless has no promise of an answer from God. God may and does hear the cry of the heart where no word is uttered ; but he never graciously answers calls of the lips where the heart is wanting. Every where the prayer of a believing heart is highly commended in Scripture.

Such piety will also make men consistent in their profession. Their words and deeds will delightfully correspond ; and this will be an immense gain. Pre-eminently God's ministers are the light of the world ; but if the light that is in them is darkness, or is obscured by dark deeds that can not come to the light without reproach to their calling, the case is sad indeed. God's servants are the salt of the earth ; but if the salt have lost its savor, it is good for nothing but to be trodden under foot of men. Paul fairly, if not effectually, silenced the slanders of many, and mightily confirmed the faith of good men, when he was able to appeal to his own life in vindication of his motives and conduct. Hear him : "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." Acts xx., 18. Compare 2 Cor. i., 12 ; 1 Thess. i., 5, 6 ; 2 Thess. iii., 7-9 ; 2 Tim. iii., 10.

The same spirit of piety makes men humble. Brown, of Haddington, says : "Though pride prevails much in my

heart, yet I think I would trample it thus far under my feet, as that I would be glad to see all my students, and not only them, but all the faithful ministers of Jesus, bringing hundreds or thousands of souls with them into heaven, though I should have but five or six."

Where piety is genuine and growing, there will be a symmetry in the character which will otherwise be lacking. Doctrine and morals, precept and practice, study and pastoral labor, closet and pulpit work, will thus be likely to have due proportions. To persons of such a character God will be a refuge; Christ will be the life; the Holy Ghost will be the oil of gladness; the benevolent affections will be steady; the zeal will be pure; and heaven will be regarded as the eternal home.

Thus it will be rendered certain that a minister will be a good man, keeping a good conscience, and showing all good fidelity in all the offices of life. As a religious teacher, he is a steward of the mysteries of God, and it is required of a steward that he be found faithful. When the man of God manifests a want of solid goodness of character, the wicked shout, and taunt the people of God. But when he is able by well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, the saints are happy and rejoice.

Thus, too, will be cured that miserable love of popular favor, which always brings a snare with it. It is but a small number of men who can without divine grace act better than Pontius Pilate when placed in trying circumstances. Some evidently believe that one may almost as well be out of the world as out of public favor, and so they become time-servers. Their principles are neither settled nor unbending. They are unstable as water. They are miserable changelings. Such will chiefly study to please men, not God; to set forth themselves, not their Master; to seek the praise which comes from sinful worms,

not the praise which cometh from God only. But a just sense of the awful majesty of God, of the sinfulness of sin, and our immense obligations to redeeming love, will sooner or later cure this man-worship, and give to all the thoughts a nobler aim.

Such piety as that described will surely lead, as opportunity offers, to the study of God's Word, and so to the search after truth. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge." "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee." Ignorance can not teach wisdom; nor is she the mother of any good thing. Christ did not send forth his apostles to found churches and to bring the world to him, until they had been for nearly three years under the tuition of him who spoke as man never spake. Moreover, they were miraculously endowed with a knowledge of many languages, and with divers gifts of the Holy Ghost. He who has never learned, can not teach. It is a great reproach to religion that its heralds and defenders should be ignorant men, without knowledge, without discernment. It is shocking to all good sense and right feeling when ignorance opens wide its brawling mouth on matters the most solemn and momentous. "A bishop must be apt to teach." What a grief to the pious when those who are set for the defense of the Gospel have need that one teach them "which be the first principles of the oracles of God." Let every "scribe be well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and bring forth out of his treasure things new and old." It is a pleasing fact that the controversy respecting an educated ministry seems to be nearly over. The danger now is that shallow attainments will be regarded as sufficient. But enlightened piety must employ a sleepless vigilance against so great an error.

It often happens that a minister's usefulness is hindered



by his adopting a carnal policy in consistency with worldly maxims which rule his behavior. Piety of the right sort will cause us to set the Lord always before us, will so expel the fear of man as to deliver us from that snare, and will make us act wisely without cunning, modestly without timidity, and boldly without impudence. Something must be risked in every exertion of duty. He who hopes to be useful without some hazard will be mistaken. Avoid courses of indirection. Ask of men for what you really wish, and no more. It is sad to find such a rule as this in a work on the ministry: "If you wish to have the *pulpit* lowered a little, begin by asking to have the *spire* taken down." Such arts are soon discovered, and must impair confidence. They are contrary to sincerity.

True piety will always give us such holy trust in God as to free us from excessive anxiety about any of our affairs, in particular respecting our standing with the world. "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." Psa. xxxvii., 3-7. He who practices thus will be safer than any man ever is by resorting to the wiles of carnal men. It is a great error of some that they are always defending themselves. Their defense, conducted in a worldly spirit, does them more harm than all the assaults of wicked men. Others are greatly injured by so training their friends as to make them heated advocates. "Over-zealous defenders don't appear to see that they actually provoke opposition. Men like to torment them." For a time one was beset with much evil speaking. Enemies were lively. Some



friends were cold. He often received anonymous letters. To those who sought an explanation, he gave it, and they were satisfied. But the storm raged on. At one time he was in danger of losing his temper. At another he seemed despondent. At another he thought of a public vindication. But the evil rumors were so many that a judicial process, which would have embraced them all, must have lasted for months. The public temper was all wrong. At last he resolved, in reliance on God, to keep silence, and maintain quietness of soul till life should end or the tempest cease. His meditation ran thus: If these rumors are true, it would not be lawful to deny them. In such case, my mouth ought to be stopped. If they are *false*, my noticing them will not make them more so. I have determined to try to imitate one of whom it is said, "He never forgot any thing except injuries." The early Christians, when reviled, did bless. 1 Cor. iv., 12. So will I. When Jesus was reviled, he reviled not again. 1 Peter ii., 23. Patient continuance in well-doing will, if any thing will, put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. 1 Peter ii., 15. It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression. Prov. xix., 11. He who utters, or without good evidence believes ✓ a false rumor, is hurt far more than any one else. Psa. xv., 3. I should pity such with all my heart. Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience. 2 Cor. i., 12. I have put all that concerns me into the hands of Christ, and he will keep what I have committed to him. 2 Tim. i., 12. It shall ever be my rule to leave off contention before I begin it, and not after I have defiled my conscience with it. Prov. xvii., 14. "It may be that the Lord will look upon mine affliction, and requite me good for this cursing this day." 2 Sam. xvi., 12. I need forgiveness for ten thousand sins. Shall I not forgive others? I have lived to no purpose, if rumors, not founded in truth, can destroy my good

name. I hope some of my detractors will soon have a better spirit. They have not always shown such evil dispositions. Experience proves that nothing is more tormenting than malignant feelings. If I am called to these trials, so were Job, and Moses, and David, and Paul, and Christ. It is enough that I fare no worse than they. This is perhaps the best opportunity I shall have for a long time of showing the meekness and patience of Christ. Time spent in prayer will do more good than if spent in fending and proving, in vindications and recriminations. Eternity is just at hand. It will make these little annoyances soon to disappear. I shall not think of them once in a million of ages; or if I do, it will be only to thank God for sustaining me under them, and for bringing me out of them. Therefore I will possess my soul in patience and maintain silence. Nothing shall change my purpose.

His friends could not change his mind, and left him—some with regret, but all with respect. Time rolled on. The tide of feeling rose to its height, and soon began to subside. His quietness itself had shown the falsity of much that had been said. Unexpected evidence arose in his behalf. His busiest enemies relaxed their efforts, and by degrees changed to be his defenders. The highest character ever given of him was by one who had circulated most of the slanders, and he had the satisfaction of seeing how safe is character in the hands of God. His meditation was wise. Its end was peace. His very purpose gave relief to his mind.

Such piety will make the conduct of ministers under affliction truly edifying to their people. They will not roar and be tumultuous in the day of trial; nor will they melt away. “If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.” On the death of his wife, Dr. Livingston writes: “It is done. The conflict is over. She has obtained the

victory, and is entered into rest. . . . I do not love my blessed Jesus any thing less for afflicting me. He is now very precious to me. All my springs are in him. He stands by me and strengthens me. It is the Lord. He hath taken away, blessed be his name notwithstanding. It is the heaviest stroke I ever received; but it is well. In the Lord I have righteousness and strength." It is heart-rending to see any professor of Christ's religion utterly dejected and comfortless in the day of sorrow and bereavement. But it is glorious to God and well for his people when we sing songs in the prison, and walk loose and unhurt and unabashed in the furnace. It shows that there is one with us like unto the Son of God.

Such piety will make men truly happy. The joy of the Lord will then be their strength. They will be anointed with the oil of gladness, and will enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. At the close of a well-spent Sabbath, Philip Henry said, "If this be not heaven, it must be the way to it." ✓



## CHAPTER VI.

### OTHER GOOD FRUITS OF PIETY.

ONE of the benefits of genuine and fervent piety is that it leads a minister to preach much to his own soul. Thus will he save himself. Thus will he be prepared to be useful to others. It is sad, indeed, when a religious teacher subjects himself to the awful reproof: "Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonorest thou God?" But blessed is he who can say with Melancthon: "I feel sure that I have not otherwise handled theology than that I might derive profit to myself." Another said: "I have prayed, I have talked, I have preached; but now I should perish after all, if I did not feed on the bread which I have broken to others." Henry Martyn wrote: "My first great business on earth is the sanctification of my own soul." Vinet adds: "Our first business is to be our own pastor." Davies says: "Before I preached a sermon to others, I derived good from it myself." Bitter will be the cup of sorrow put into the hands of him who at last cries, "They have made me a keeper of vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." What anguish must wring the heart that says, "I taught the way of life to others, but I walked not in that way myself; I have commended holiness, but I have not practiced it; I have called on men to submit to God, but I



have never yielded myself to God ; I have preached Christ to others, but I never secured an interest in him."

Uction in all our ministrations is greatly promoted by genuine piety. It is needed in our most private ministrations. It is essential to any right performance of our public duties. Bridges says: "The most mighty eloquence and the most devoted diligence will be utterly inefficient, without the unction that is brought down from heaven by frequent and fervent supplication." The best and strongest machinery requires oil, else it will creak and tear itself to pieces, or waste its power in moving itself. So all our native talents, and wealth of learning, and laborious industry will but be a waste of good things, unless the Holy Spirit makes men to serve the Lord with gladness, and with joyful hearts to toil and suffer for Christ and his people.

It is a great thing to live and long for the salvation of sinners. Who has ever been very useful, if he was cold or indifferent on this subject ?

Rutherford could assure his flock that they were "the object of his tears, cares, fears, and daily prayers ; that he labored among them early and late. And my witness," said he, "is above, that your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me."

John Welch often in the coldest winter nights rose for prayer, and was found weeping on the ground and wrestling with the Lord on account of his people, and saying to his wife, when she pressed him for an explanation of his distress, "I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, while I know not how it is with many of them."

Of Alleine, author of the *Alarm to Unconverted Sinners*, it is said that "he was infinitely and insatiably greedy of the conversion of souls ; and to this end he poured out his very heart in prayer and preaching."

Bunyan said: "In my preaching I could not be satisfied, unless some fruits did appear in my work."

"I would think it a greater happiness," said Matthew Henry, "to gain one soul to Christ, than mountains of silver and gold to myself. If I do not gain souls, I shall enjoy all other gains with very little satisfaction, and I would rather beg my bread from door to door than undertake this great work."

Doddridge, writing to a friend, remarked: "I long for the conversion of souls more sensibly than for any thing besides. Methinks I could not only labor, but die for it with pleasure."

Similar is the death-bed testimony of the sainted Brown, of Haddington. "Oh, labor, labor," said he to his sons, "to win souls to Christ."

It is said of the learned John Smith "that he had resolved very much to lay aside other studies, and to travail in the salvation of men's souls, after whose good he most earnestly thirsted."

Brainerd could say of himself, on more than one occasion, "I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls to Christ. While I was asleep, I dreamed of these things; and when I waked, the first thing I thought of was this great work. All my desire was for the conversion of the heathen, and all my hope was in God."

The elder President Edwards wrote: "I had great longings for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world; my secret prayer used to be in great part taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened in any part of the world, that appeared to me, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interests of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it, and it would animate and refresh me. I used to be

earnest to read public news-letters mainly for that end, to see if I could not find some news favorable to religion in the world.

“My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the world; the histories of the past advancement of Christ’s kingdom have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing in all my reading has been to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted.”

What man without living piety ever felt, or thought, or planned thus? Well does Oxenden say: “Our work is with souls—immortal souls—souls born for endless weal or woe. And these souls are committed to our care.” This is just what the apostle says of good ministers: “They watch for your souls as they that must give an account.” Blessed is he who loves the flock of God with an undying love.

In this way of piety, too, ministers are kept from that laborious idleness which fritters away life on matters quite aside from their calling, and of comparatively little importance to the interests of mankind. A German scholar, when dying, is reported to have expressed regret at having given most of his life to the comparative degree of the adjective rather than to the preterite of the verb. This was of course all idle. But it was a bitter lament of a learned Dutchman: “I have wasted my life in laborious idleness.” A sad account can ministers give of their lives, if it shall turn out that their energies have been expended on things having no connection with their appropriate work. In his sermon on the evil and danger of neglecting men’s souls, Doddridge says: “Oh, my brethren! let us consider how fast we are posting through this dying life, in which we are to manage concerns of infinite moment; how fast we are passing on to the immediate presence of



our Lord, to give up our account to him ! I would not for ten thousand worlds be that man who, when God shall ask him at last how he has employed his time while he continued a minister of his Church and had the care of souls, shall be obliged to reply, ‘I have restored many corrupt passages in the classics, and illustrated many which were before obscure. I have cleared up many intricacies in chronology or geography. I have solved many perplexed cases of algebra. I have refined on astronomical calculations, and left behind me many sheets on those curious and difficult subjects. And these are the employments in which my life has been worn out, while preparations for the pulpit, and ministrations in it, did not demand my more immediate attendance.’ Oh, sirs ! as for the waters that are drawn from these springs, how sweet soever they may taste to a curious mind that thirsts after them, or an ambitious mind that thirsts for the applause they sometimes procure, I fear there is too often reason to pour them out before the Lord with rivers of penitential tears, as the blood of souls which have been forgotten, while these trifles have been remembered and pursued.” Let us not seek for an idle, or even for an easy life. Idleness is misery, many testify. When Napoleon was slowly withering away from disease and *ennui* together on the rock of St. Helena, it was told him that one of his old friends, an ex-colonel in the Italian army, was dead. “What disease killed him ?” asked Napoleon. “That of having nothing to do,” it was answered. “Enough,” said Napoleon, “even had he been an emperor.”

Thus, too, will be awakened that pious confidence in God, without which a man will be but as a reed shaken with the wind. No command is more important than this : “Have faith in God ;” and no disciple or servant of Christ can offer a better prayer than this : “Lord, increase our faith.”



Our weakness renders it essential that we know how to recline on an almighty arm. Nothing else can sustain us in a thousand trials and temptations. But he, who rightly believes, has a shield that no fiery dart can penetrate, and can stand in the midst of the ruin of all his earthly plans and prospects, and say, "Though he slay me, I will trust him." He who knows that his message is true, and is assured that the fuller the proof and the severer the test to which it is subjected, the more firm it will appear to be, will believe and therefore speak. He will not give to the trumpet an uncertain sound. Its utterances will be the echo of his own experience.

Moreover, piety will beget and foster that tender pity and generous love for perishing men, without which the most sacred duties will be irksome, and the sweetest messages be delivered in a dull, or, possibly, in a harsh and severe tone. Cowper says: "If a man has great and good news to tell me, he will not do it angrily. It is not easy, therefore, to conceive on what ground a scolding minister can justify a conduct which only proves that he does not understand his errand." Harshness never becomes the minister of the meek and lowly Jesus. Well did Paul exhibit the right temper when he said, "By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Acts xx., 31. Blessed is he who is joyfully ready to spend and be spent for Christ and for perishing men.

Such piety will happily settle those much mooted questions about our manners: Ought a minister of the Gospel to be a gentleman? if so, in what sense are we to understand the term? If the meaning is that a servant of Christ should give no needless offense, and that he is bound to try to please men for their good, the Bible is clear. The apostle of the circumcision expressly calls on even private

Christians to “be courteous.” And the apostle of the uncircumcision as clearly calls on his converts to give heed to all that is lovely and of good report. The amenities of life are no foes to any valuable refinement in life or manners. But Cecil is right when he says, “The character of a minister is far beyond that of a mere *gentleman*. It takes a higher walk. He will indeed study to be a real gentleman; he will be the farthest possible from a rude man; he will not disdain to learn nor to practice the decencies of society. But he will sustain a still higher character.” One of the rules of a Methodist preacher as given by John Wesley is: “Do not *affect* the *gentleman*. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a *dancing-master*. A preacher of the Gospel should be the *servant of all*.” At first these words sound harsh. But their author never meant to decry good-breeding or courteous manners. He was himself a thorough gentleman. Adam Clarke doubtless gives the just view: “Mr. Wesley does not say, Do not *act like a gentleman*; this he did himself, and this he recommended, as well by precept as example; but he says, *Do not affect the gentleman*: do not pretend to be what you are not—to be nobly descended when you are not, nor to be above serving yourself or others, even in the meanest offices of life. He who is well-bred, decent, gentle, and obliging in all his conduct, is a *gentleman*; he who *affects* this character is none, no more than a *monkey* is a *man*.”

A good writer describes true politeness as “genuine kindness kindly expressed.” Such politeness requires nothing more than good sense, following good customs, from a heart full of good feelings. What a noble specimen of true delicacy of sentiment and refinement of feeling was the apostle Paul. Proofs are found in all his history and in all his writings. When Agrippa opened the way, Paul

nobly cried : “I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.” He thus declared his love for all men, wishing them salvation ; but he shows his great delicacy of feeling by saying that he had it not in his heart to wish any man to be doomed to carry with him a chain.



## CHAPTER VII.

### MINISTERIAL EDUCATION.

THOSE who teach must first learn. He who would not be a blind guide, must be disciplined in the things of religion. The necessity for instruction arises from our ignorance. The process by which such instruction is gained may be extraordinary. Such was the training of all the apostles, Paul not excepted. Men are no longer thus taught. Christ is no more personally on earth. Men no more learn languages by miracle. If any man claims supernatural teaching, let him produce the proof.

On the other hand, no merely human instruction can ever make a good minister of Christ. All the schools and masters of the world can never so instruct any one as to make him wise in winning souls to Christ. God, of his mere sovereign mercy, must vouchsafe the teachings of the Holy Spirit. He alone can effectually give true, spiritual views of God and of life everlasting. All saving knowledge comes from the Father of lights by the illumination of the Holy Ghost. John Newton was right in saying, "None but he who made the world can make a minister of the Gospel. If a young man has capacity, culture and application may make him a scholar, a philosopher, or an orator; but a true minister must have certain principles, motives, feelings, and aims, which no industry or endeavors of men can either acquire or communicate. They must be given from above, or they can not be received." Nor will any toil or study on the part of man prove a substitute for divine illumination. Were this so, man would be independ-

ent. He who unaided can solve the mysteries of redemption, can do any thing. Bishop Sanderson says: "It was Simon Magus's error to think that the gifts of God might be purchased with money; and it has a spice of his sin, and so may go for a kind of simony, to think that spiritual gifts may be purchased with labor. You may rise up early and go to bed late, and study hard and read much, and devour the marrow of the best authors; and when you have done all, unless God give a blessing to your endeavors, be as lean and meagre in regard of true and useful learning as Pharaoh's lean kine were after they had eaten up the fat ones. It is God that both ministereth the seed to the sower, and multiplieth the seed sown."

One rightly instructed as a servant of Christ and of his people will put a high estimate on the work of the ministry. He will place no work above it, and none on a level with it. He will envy no secular potentate. He would exchange his pastoral crook for no earthly sceptre. His pulpit is his throne. It is his meat and drink to do and suffer the will of God. He has also learned in some good measure his weakness and his dependence on God. He loves prayer. If he had had no access to a throne of grace, even Paul would have been but a reed shaken with the wind.

Such a man has a great love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Lacking this, any man is a poor, vacillating creature, and a miserable self-deceiver. To preach Christ without love to him can hardly be less contrary to flesh and blood than it was for Haman to go through the city leading a horse with Mordecai mounted on him, and proclaiming, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor. Due love to Christ will make one willing to be offered on the sacrifice and service of his people's faith. To learn these things is the result of the lessons taught by God himself.

It is also necessary that a minister should know God's mind and will revealed for our salvation. This supposes a minister to have been a learner, a scholar, a student, a disciple. On this matter the following things commend themselves to our sober judgments :

1. If an unlearned ministry can meet the demands and supply the wants of the age, the work is already done. There are thousands of such preachers in the world. They are found in all Christendom. In our own land they preach scores of sermons every week. And yet we all see much work to be done.

2. We have no reason for believing that an untrained ministry will in future be more respected or efficient than it has been in the past. Indeed, some things make it probable that it will be peculiarly impotent and dangerous.

3. Scripture and reason declare that knowledge is essential to a minister. Otherwise he can not "speak unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." 1 Cor. xiv., 3. Even under the old dispensation, a thorough knowledge of God's will was enjoined upon all religious teachers. Christ took great pains that his apostles should know their message before they undertook to deliver it.

4. Mere unsanctified learning does but puff up. It can not save its possessor or any one else.

5. In all that can elevate society, especially its moral tone, ministers should be among the foremost actors. It is a great injury to the cause of Christ when he who should teach the people knowledge knows not whereof he affirms.

6. The true object of learning is not to veil truth, but to bring it to light. "Brethren," said one, "it will take all our learning to make things plain."

7. In order to profit, learning must be sound. He who is as fanciful as he is learned can not be a safe teacher ;



and he who is shallow can not comprehend any thing considerable in the love of God.

8. Therefore learning should be extensive, and not merely elementary; it should be various, and not confined to one or a few things. Leighton well said that there could not be too much learning, if it were but sanctified. And Owen adds: "The cursory perusal of a few books is thought sufficient to make any man wise enough to be a minister. And not a few undertake to be teachers of others who would scarcely be admitted as tolerable disciples in a well-ordered church. But there belongeth more unto this wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, than most men are aware of. . . . The Gospel, the dispensation and declaration of which is committed unto the ministers of the Church, is 'the wisdom of God in a mystery;' and so their principal duty is to become so wise and understanding in that mystery as that they may be able to declare it to others, without which they have no ministry committed unto them by Jesus Christ."

9. There is not the slightest ground of rational belief that the Head of the Church does in our day ever communicate necessary learning to his ministers otherwise than by the divine blessing on the use of the ordinary means, such as hearing, reading, inquiry, study, reflection.

10. It is also evident that a few hurried weeks or months of study will not do. Dr. Samuel Miller said, "Impatient haste is the bane of deep intellectual work." The apostles, though ignorant men when called to follow Christ, were not so when sent forth in his name. They enjoyed his private and public instructions for three years in all. Moreover, they had inspiration, gifts of tongues, revelations, gifts of healing, and wrought mighty signs and wonders.

11. In study a minister must also be diligent. Thomas Shepard said to a young minister, "Abhor one hour of idle-

ness as you would be ashamed of one hour of drunkenness." Mather wrote: "There was never an eminent, who was not an industrious man. You must be diligent in your business, if you hope to stand in any desirable circumstances before that great King unto whose service you are dedicated." Every day in one's life is a leaf in one's history. This is specially true of a student. Learning comes by a slow but regular process of accretion.

12. A minister's studies must also be conducted in humility. Pride goeth before destruction. What servant of Christ ever made any great advancement in spiritual lore, except as he received the kingdom of God as a little child? If our learning gives us high notions of ourselves, we are undone. If we would reap in joy, we must sow in tears. If we would draw great supplies from the wells of salvation, we must put down empty pitchers.

13. Yet no Church may require that in all cases a given amount of time be spent in particular studies. It is enough if, in soundness of mind, mental vigor, and scriptural knowledge, one is qualified to feed and guide the flock. Perhaps no evangelical Church would hesitate to set apart to the ministry any one who had a tithe of the sound knowledge and excellent character of John Bunyan.

14. The course of learning ordinarily to be insisted on should embrace such a course of science and literature as will enlarge and train the mind, and enable one to communicate his thoughts in a proper manner. It is a good thing to be acquainted with physical, mathematical, mental, and moral science. A good knowledge of our own tongue is a great attainment. It is also well for a preacher to be acquainted with the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. Nothing in the policy of that malignant apostate, Julian, expressed so deep and cunning a malice against the kingdom of Christ as his forbidding to Christian youth ac-

cess to classical schools and studies. The great importance of the Latin language is threefold: *first*, it refines one's taste, and supplies him with a precise knowledge of a great portion of the words and terms of his own language; *secondly*, it aids him in acquiring a good understanding of several other languages; *thirdly*, it opens to him vast store-houses of the best theological writings yet given to the world by uninspired men. The great importance of a knowledge of the Greek is also threefold: *first*, above all languages, it is polished, beautiful, graceful, and so it moulds the taste in a pleasant way; *secondly*, the whole of the Old Testament was before the Christian era rendered into Greek, and this translation is freely quoted by our Lord and his apostles; *thirdly*, and above all, the whole New Testament was first written in Greek, as we have it to this day. The importance of a knowledge of the Hebrew is, that in it we have the Old Testament. The original Scriptures contain the very words of God, so as no translation can. The testimony of Melancthon in favor of the study of Greek and Hebrew ought not to be forgotten: "We shall never be able to preserve among us a knowledge of the pure Gospel without a knowledge of the languages." Such testimonies have long been borne to the importance of these studies as ought to remove doubt from all minds. Some of these studies were formerly carried further than they are now. Secker says that at the school where he was educated the pupils were "obliged to speak Latin always, except when below stairs with the family." Samuel Palmer, speaking of his education, says: "We disputed every day in Latin upon the several philosophical controversies. . . . After dinner our work began by reading some one of the Greek or Latin historians, orators, or poets. . . . My tutor began the morning public prayer in the school, which he performed with great devotion, but not



with equal elegance and beauty, in English; but in Latin, in which he often prayed, no man could exceed him for exact thought, curious style, and devout pathos." Doddridge says of Dr. Jennings's school: "The first two years we read the Scriptures in the family from Hebrew, Greek, and French into English. We were obliged to talk Latin within some certain bounds of time and place." Orton says that at Doddridge's school the students every day read Hebrew and Greek, and took measures to retain their knowledge of Latin. In like manner the history of the Log College at Neshaminy, of Blair's school at Fagg's Manor, of Liberty Hall in Virginia, and of many other renowned schools in our own land, testifies to the great value of Latin and Greek. Judge Catron says: "I was taught by the Rev. James Witherspoon, a Presbyterian minister. . . . He could have preached in Latin as well as in English."

The present century has seen no man of more power than Robert Hall. When two years old he could neither walk nor talk. Yet he attained such eminence that Dugald Stewart said of him: "There is a living writer who combines the beauties of Johnson, Addison, and Burke, without their imperfections. It is a dissenting minister of Cambridge, the Rev. Robert Hall. Whoever wishes to see the English language in its perfection, must read his writings." Dr. Parr says: "Mr. Hall, like Bishop Taylor, has the eloquence of an orator, the fancy of a poet, the acuteness of a schoolman, the profoundness of a philosopher, and the piety of a saint." In his biography we find that at twelve years of age Hall had made great progress in Latin and Greek; that at Aberdeen he made great proficiency in the same branches; and that through life he renewed his great strength by the same studies.

In his life of Dion, Plutarch says: "Hippomachus, the

athlete, used to say that he could tell one of his own scholars at any distance, if he was only carrying meat home from the market; so the sentiments of those who have had a liberal education have a similar influence on their manners, and give a peculiar grace and propriety to their conduct."

The great object of every good education is to train the faculties to just and accurate thinking, investigation, and statement; and to prepare it to acquire and use knowledge. Having acquired such a preliminary education as was attainable, let the young preacher bring his mind to the study of all those things belonging to a thorough course of theological study, and store his mind with the facts and principles of revealed truth, as taught by inspired men, and as illustrated in the history of the world and of the Church.

This done, let him bend his entire energies toward acquiring the holy art of rightfully presenting God's Word, and persuading men to righteousness. Let him learn to bring forth from his treasury things new and old. In this work, natural and acquired, intellectual and moral qualities strangely unite. Every thing helps or hinders success. Says South: "I am confidently persuaded that there is no endowment, no natural gift whatever, with which the great Father of lights has furnished the mind of man, but may, in its highest operations, be sanctified, and rendered subservient to the great work of the ministry. Real religion engages no man, *particularly no minister*, to be dull, to lounge, and to be indolent; but, on the contrary, it stirs all the active powers of the soul in designing and bringing about great and valuable ends."

The same course of remark applies to all our acquisitions. Truth is one, not manifold; and as the distant star may guide the pilgrim over the desert, so light from a very re-

mote quarter may elucidate a matter otherwise dark to us. All knowledge is useful; only let every thing bend to the great object of making one an able minister of the New Testament. Says Henry Martyn: "May I be taught to remember that all other studies are subservient to the great work of ministering holy things to immortal souls! May the most holy works of the ministry, and those which require most devotedness of soul, be the most dear to my heart." Blessed is that servant of Christ who habitually lays all his powers and attainments under tribute to the one great end of holding forth the Word of life.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### A MINISTER'S STUDIES.

SCRIPTURE and the general sense of mankind agree in requiring ministers of religion to be men of study. Whoever may be careless, they should be thoughtful. The old prophets searched diligently into the meaning of their prophecies and the time of their fulfillment. They meditated in God's Word day and night. At least one of the inspired writers was a man of exceedingly varied acquirements. "God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the East country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." 1 Kings iv., 29-33. So that Solomon's studies were of the most varied kinds. They were especially full in several branches of natural science, and in the maxims of prudence.

The New Testament enjoins hard study on ministers of the Gospel. They must be scribes well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. They must bring out of their treasure things new and old. They must meditate on these things. ✓

So anxious was the pious Richard Baxter to have time for study, that when some visitors who had sat a while said to him, "We are afraid, sir, that we break in upon your time;" he replied, "To be sure you do." And Job Orton said, "I will have my hours. At them I shall be glad to see my friends; but they must come soon, and go soon, or not at all. . . . If I could not do this, I would remove to the Land's End or to a Welsh mountain. . . . I am independent, and will be so. . . . I have little company and acquaintance. . . . But I have a numerous and excellent society of prophets, apostles, and practical writers, especially Baxter, Bates, and Scudder, with whom I have lately been conversing." More than one eminent man has had a warning to visitors put on the door of his study, calling on them to be short.

The studies of a minister, like those of a lawyer or physician, are both general and special. His general studies are such as are designed to enlarge his information and improve his knowledge, without any reference to any particular duty of his calling. His special studies relate to his preparations for particular occasions, in which he is called to act a part. Some ministers give most of their time to general studies, and quite neglect or slight special preparations. Such often become learned and powerful men, but in the matter of preaching they habitually fall short of what is expected of them. The reason is that they never do their best in the pulpit. In a public debate, in a deliberative assembly, and once or twice perhaps in a lifetime in the pulpit, they display uncommon vigor. But this is not so in their ordinary preaching. On the other hand, some men seldom study except with direct reference to preaching. The consequence is that in proportion to their native talents they habitually preach well, but they never grow much. They carry with them through life a narrow-

ness of range and a dwarfishness of mind that might have been avoided by a proper course.

The true rule of conduct is to pursue general studies as you can, and always try to be doing something that way. At the same time, never slight special preparations. Think well on every matter you discuss before the people.

One of the most striking deficiencies in many preachers of this day is the want of a familiar acquaintance with the English version of the Scriptures. Let ministers read the Scriptures much. Let them commit to memory considerable portions of God's Word. Scott says: "The minister of the Gospel is as truly serving Christ and the people when in his study he is searching the Scriptures, meditating and preparing for his work, as when he is publicly preaching the Word to the congregation. He should endeavor to get well acquainted with his instructions, and to speak from a matured judgment and an experienced heart, and with fervency of spirit. He should be careful, both in dispensing the Word and in administering the sacraments, to guard the people against superstition and false confidence, and from mistaking the notion or form for the 'power of godliness;' and every thing in his outward accommodations, manner of life, and method of spending his time, should be so regulated as may best tend to make him 'approved unto God,' a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

If any ask, How many hours should be given to study? the answer is that no rule can be given for all cases. Some can endure more confinement than others. Some have less pastoral visiting to do than others. In some languor is soon brought on, and where this is the case profit ceases. Some have undertaken to study sixteen hours a day. For a time this may be done with apparent advantage. But very few can endure it long. It will commonly bring on



premature old age and many infirmities. Some men may endure the weariness of twelve hours' study for a long time; but even they would probably make as much progress in a term of years if they would study eight or ten hours. Some, indeed, can not with any profit study more than five or six hours a day; and a few even less than that. In this matter it is quite possible for every man to find out what is best for him to do. Let him be honest and not blind to his evil propensities in making his decision. Says Morris: "To be careful how we manage and employ our time is one of the first precepts that is taught in the school of wisdom, and one of the last that is learned. And 'tis a prodigious thing to consider that, although among all the talents which are committed to our stewardship, time, upon several accounts, is the most precious, yet there is not any one of which the generality of men are more profuse and regardless. Nay, 'tis obvious to observe that even those persons who are frugal and thrifty in every thing else, are yet extremely prodigal of their best revenue—time, 'of which alone,' as Seneca observed, 'tis a virtue to be covetous.'"

One of the greatest enemies to successful study is fondness for sleep. It is said that one of Bonaparte's generals slept but one hour in twenty-four for a whole year. But he was not at this time a student in his chair. Nor is it possible for us to conceive how he endured so severe a trial. Yet it is true that some men can do with very little sleep. Dr. Franklin and John Wesley did not sleep six hours. Lord Brougham could do with less. Napoleon rarely slept five hours. But he had one advantage of constitution which is denied to many. After protracted wakefulness he could sleep a long time. Bourrienne, his secretary, says that after his master returned from Russia, he slept eighteen hours. But such cases as these are never to

be held up for examples to the rest of mankind. Those who are inclined to excessive nervous excitement require most sleep. Whenever, in health, sleep ceases to be sound, it is no longer necessary to vigor and refreshment. To sleep for luxury is a shame. There are no more formidable diseases than those brought on by excessive sleeping. No doubt much of the apoplexy of modern times is owing to this cause. On the other hand, the want of sufficient sleep, and at proper times, is filling the land with the most frightful forms of neuralgic diseases. The rule is, find out how much you need, and secure that quantity; but beware of sleeping more than is required.

Some who lie not too long in bed, yet soon yield to dullness, and may be said to be seldom more than half awake—they mope away a drowsy existence. In such cases inertness becomes a disease, the vital functions become torpid, life stagnates, and death prematurely ensues. But even where life is prolonged, the mind is never roused for any considerable time to put forth its utmost vigor. Such persons are subject to many distressing sensations of body and of mind. Their existence is not happy or desirable.

In study, as in other things, a habit of deferring is very mischievous. Some men, like Felix, are waiting for a convenient season, until the best part of life is gone. They muse, they plod, they almost promise; but idle imaginations are no substitute for close, rigorous attention to things. Two hours a day, for the secular days of the year, are equal to one hundred and four days of study of six hours each. In that time many a man has learned a language, mastered a science, or quite changed his mental habits.

Much time is wasted by some in idle sauntering from house to house without a definite object. Some visits are indeed formal; nor should all such be refused. But then

they need not be long. When a minister's visits have chief reference to his social position, or that of his family, they may be regarded as poor compensation for wasted time.

Mention has already been made of idle visits to ourselves. The only way is to break them up. When a pastor's parlor or study becomes a lounge for idlers, a place to hear or to tell some new thing, he is on the high road to contempt.

√ Beware of wasting time on unimportant or unprofitable inquiries and researches. You will be constantly tempted to such things, and you must resist the temptation. There is one class of men who are eager after the popular lectures of the day. Others seem to live upon quarterly reviews. Others affect to keep up with the improvements in art and science, and are smatterers at a thousand things foreign from their calling. Such men will read any thing of absorbing interest. It is a great injury to a congregation when the pastor and his family are among the first to have the latest novel.

It is certainly true that all knowledge may be useful. Light may come from a quarter whence least expected. But it is folly to maintain that all knowledge is equally useful in a given calling. The lawyer who has a vanity of being esteemed learned in therapeutics, and the surgeon who spends his leisure hours in poring over black-letter law-books, are alike impairing both energies and character. The minister of the Gospel may by an examination of hand-books on many subjects gain all the information that is likely to arise from that quarter, and to be tributary to his great business, without devoting his best energies to the minutiae of matters which he has not time to master.

Where a study is highly auxiliary to a minister's main design, it would be well if his mind would pursue it with



ardor, and endeavor to learn all he conveniently can on the subject. We have sciolists; we want masters.

Commonly it is not wise for those who are past middle life to attempt studies wholly new, and especially if they be difficult. There are exceptions to this remark, but they are not numerous.

It is unwise for any man to give his chief attention to studies toward which he has no special leaning. Some men have a foolish idea that those studies which are the most disagreeable are the most profitable. This may be so, to some extent, in an entrance upon any matter; but it is not true when we have had some time to look into things. There is great force in the old saying, "*Nil invitâ Minervâ.*" When the mind is really wearied with any matter, it is best to drop it.

It has for ages been a settled rule of the great majority of the best students that the hardest of their labors should be performed in the earlier part of the day, and the lighter reserved for the afternoon and evening. This rule has carried men through worlds of toil. Nor is there any exception to it, where the morning can be secured for study. If necessarily devoted to other things, the latter part of the day is all that is left, and we must do the best we can.

There is hardly a more difficult subject than the recreations, bodily and mental, of a minister. Bodily recreations may easily be found for one who has a country charge. Visiting his parishioners on horseback is the best exercise in the world for one of sedentary habits. The same would be true of village and city pastors, if they could afford to keep a horse, and if it were otherwise convenient. But this is seldom the case. In choosing bodily recreations, none are more suitable than the more useful. Sawing wood, working in a garden, walking to see the poor and afflicted, are all suitable. Ordinary gymnastics are too vio-

lent and fatiguing for a student, except after the labors of the day are ended.

One of the most serious difficulties in the way of a student is the temptation which presses him to forsake one thing for another, and so never to make thorough work in any thing he undertakes.

When you read, select your authors with care, taking chiefly such as are of long and well-established reputation. "Of making many books there is no end." He who reads all, or reads without selection, will find his mind often unsettled, and seldom satisfied. Twaddle in a book is as unprofitable as that often heard in conversation.

Read with pen or pencil in hand. Mark what is in any way striking in any book you read; and if you wish to make it surely your own, copy it out, or repeat it soon afterward. It was a good resolution of the elder Edwards, "When I think of any theorem in divinity to be solved, immediately to do what I can toward solving it, if circumstances do not hinder."

The questions are often asked: What are the advantages of "Commonplace-books?" And how should they be used? On this subject much depends on personal habits. Let a man examine the best forms of such books and decide for himself. A scrap-book would be useful to any careful man.

Secular pursuits, intended to bring us pecuniary advantage, are great enemies to success in study. They may be necessary, but they are very dangerous to our eminence. The Son of Sirach has left some words on this subject well worth attention: "The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure; and he that hath little business shall become wise. How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plow, and that glorieth in the goad that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labors, and whose talk is of bull-

ocks? He giveth his mind to make furrows, and is diligent to give the kine fodder. So every carpenter and workmaster, that laboreth night and day: and they that cut and grave seals, and are diligent to make great variety, and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch to finish a work: the smith also, sitting by the anvil, and considering the iron-work, the vapor of fire wasteth his flesh, and he fighteth with the heat of the furnace; the noise of the hammer and the anvil is ever in his ears, and his eyes look still upon the pattern of the thing that he maketh; he setteth his mind to finish his work, and watcheth to polish it perfectly: so doth the potter, sitting at his work, and turning the wheel about with his feet, who is always carefully set at his work, and maketh all his work by number; he fashioneth the clay with his arm, and boweth down his strength before his feet; he applieth himself to lead it over; and he is diligent to make clean the furnace: all these trust to their hands: and every one is wise in his own work. Without these can not a city be inhabited: and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down; they shall not be sought for in public council, nor sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit on the judge's seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment; and they shall not be found where parables are spoken. But they will maintain the state of the world, and (all) their desire is in the work of their craft." Ecclus. xxxviii., 24-34.

One of the greatest hinderances to success in study is the chafing of bad tempers. No class of men above Christian students have need to pray for a quiet and peaceable life. Among the purposes of the elder President Edwards are these:

"*Resolved*, Never to do any thing out of revenge.

"*Resolved*, Never to suffer the least motions of anger toward irrational beings.



*“Resolved, To do always what I can toward making, maintaining, and preserving peace, when it can be done without an over-balancing detriment in other respects.*

*“Resolved, Not only to refrain from an air of dislike, fretfulness, and anger in conversation, but to exhibit an air of love, cheerfulness, and benignity.*

*“Resolved, When I am most conscious of provocations to ill-nature and anger, that I will strive most to feel and act good-naturedly.”*

Though these purposes were formed for the purpose of avoiding sin and growing in holiness, yet any man of discernment must perceive in them the elements of that moral discipline which left the intellectual powers of this great man free and unclouded. In like manner we are told that Sir Isaac Newton and many other great men have been remarkably free from the agitating passions.

Besides the heavy works on dogmatic and polemic theology, it would be a great matter if the clergy would study with care works on practical and experimental religion. For the improvement of their own piety they will do well to study the practical writings of Owen, Flavel, Baxter, Doddridge, and others. Such writings will also be of great service in showing them how to bring the truth to bear on others.

Ministers should avoid skeletons of sermons. They are of little service to any. They are great hinderances to some.

Avoid debt. Owe no man any thing but love. A heavy debt is a millstone around a student's neck. Clark says: “Never go in debt for food, clothes, or any thing else: it is no sin to die in a ditch through hunger or cold; but it is a crime to go in debt, when there is not the fullest prospect of being able to pay. It is the most certain and honorable way never to sit down to the food nor put on

the clothes till the bill for both are discharged. By these means you will keep clear of the world, and make most of the little you have. Every word of the old adage is true: 'Live not on *trust*, for that is the way to pay *double*.'

In study, earnest prayer is a great help to success. Philip Henry thus wrote upon a studying day: "I forgot when I began, explicitly and expressly, to crave help from God, and the chariot-wheels drove *accordingly*. Lord, forgive my omission, and keep me in the way of duty."

Another old divine observes: "If God drop not down his assistance, we write with a pen that *hath no ink*; if any would need walk dependently upon God more than others, the minister is he."

It was once said to a minister of Christ, whose labors had been abundantly successful, "Sir, if you did not *plow* in your closet, you would not *reap* in your pulpit."

The eminent author of *The Saint's Rest*, being reminded of his labors on his death-bed, replied, "I was but a *pen* in God's hand; and what praise is due to a pen?"

"After having composed and delivered a sermon," says Bishop Horne, "I have often thought of and repeated the following lines of Thomson:

"Be gracious, heaven! for now laborious man  
Has done his part. Ye fostering breezes, blow!  
Ye softening dews, ye tender showers, descend!  
And temper all, thou world-reviving sun,  
Into a perfect year."

Dr. Chalmers says: "A minister has no ground to hope for fruits from his exertions until in himself he has no hope; but he has learned to put no faith in the point and energy of sentences, until he feels that a man may be mighty to compel the attention, and mighty to regale the imagination, and mighty to silence the gainsayer, and yet not mighty to the pulling down of strongholds."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE RIGHT TEMPER FOR A THEOLOGIAN.

EVERY one must have observed that very different degrees of success attend the studies of those engaged in inquiring into sacred things. Nor is this difference always decided by natural talents, nor by literary acquirements. Wholly sanctified to the glory of God, these are truly important; but relied upon, they augur but a splendid failure. The history of the Church abounds in mournful illustrations of the danger of leaning on these things, and of forgetting the necessity of other and higher qualifications.

That the study of religious truth, conducted in a wrong temper, will be productive of little or no profit, is a truth commonly admitted by serious people. Surely the Scriptures so teach. Moreover, a wrong temper is itself criminal, and should be avoided if it were no hinderance to one's progress in knowledge. The want of a right temper produces more miscarriages in the lives of theologians than all other things united. The whole history of theological studies does not tell us of one who kept his heart with excessive diligence. The reason is that out of it are the issues of life.

There is reason for believing that many fail in their studies because of the power of *prejudice*. Nothing is more opposed to docility, or to our advancement in learning, than a state of mind forearmed against the truth. Impartiality, essential to high success, is difficult of attainment. Prejudices are judgments for or against things



proposed to our mind without investigation, or at least without sufficient foundation. They result from education, from temperament, from sectarianism, or from some sin indulged. Even when prejudices are in favor of the truth, they have no saving efficacy. Sanctification is not through the strength of our prejudices, but through the belief of the truth. Prejudices against the truth often prove fatal, overriding strong convictions, and causing the entire and sometimes the bitter rejection of doctrines essential to salvation. When one is in such a state that he will not examine evidence and truth with a good degree of impartiality, it is certain that he will go astray. When men come to God's Word, not to be taught, but to teach; not to learn the mind of the Spirit, but to find some way of supporting error, or of evading unwelcome truths; when with avidity they seize any thing favoring their dogmas, but carefully avoid whatever wars against their preconceived opinions, they effectually exclude themselves from the highway to any large attainments in theology. The light that is in them thus becomes darkness. Except so far as sanctified, the human mind is at enmity against God, against his nature, his will, his word; so that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Some indulge prejudices against particular books of Scripture, and others against particular doctrines of God's Word. Such are often found following vain and wild notions. One says: "The Scripture is so penned that they who have a mind to know, may know; they who have a mind to wrangle, may take occasion enough of offense, and justly perish by the rebellion of their own minds; for God never intended to satisfy men of stubborn and perverse spirits." Richard Baxter says: "Fame and tradition, education and the country's vote, do become the

ordinary parents of many lies; and folly maketh us to fasten so fearlessly in our first apprehensions, that they keep open the door to abundance more falsehoods; and it must be clear teachers, or great, impartial studies of a self-denying mind, with a great blessing of God, that must deliver us from prejudice, and undeceive us." It requires no humility, no faith, no grace of any kind, to be an earnest partisan of any dogma or sect. Whatever our education may have been, we will find it no easy task to eradicate prejudices. It is a great mercy when God enables us to lay aside "foretaken opinions," and to sit down with prevailing candor to the study of God's truth.

Such are the weakness of the human mind and its liability to err, that nothing is more reasonable than unaffected *modesty* in every theologian. The greatest proficient in every branch of knowledge have been tenderly conscious of their own weakness and liability to err. The books are full of commendations of this virtue in all the walks of life. Bruyère has well expressed the views of many when he says: "Modesty is to merit, as shades to figures in a picture, giving it strength and beauty." This is true. But modesty is not a mere ornament. It is of essential use in the conduct of our studies. It should therefore be unfeigned. The Scriptures lay great stress on this matter. "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him." "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Our Lord chiefly refers to this modest estimate of ourselves, when he says: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." He who is grossly ignorant of his own faults and deficiencies, who greatly overestimates his abilities and attainments, will hardly advance in any thing good or

great. He who has real piety and much knowledge of himself, must be lowly, far removed from flippant self-conceit.

When the celebrated Hermann Witsius delivered his inaugural as professor at Leyden, October 16, 1698, his discourse was *DE THEOLOGO MODESTO*. A short extract from that address is here pertinent: "*Monstra mihi hominem, qui sui neque contemtor neque admirator sit; qui divinæ munificentiae dona, procul invidiâ, æquo pretio in aliis æstimat; qui affectus in ordinem cogere, et animum, linguam, stilum moderari didicit; qui res quasque suis prudenter momentis librat, easque ita prosequitur uti singularum genio convenit; qui neque rigidus neque mollis est, sed tractabilis; sine pusillanimitate lenis, sine latitudine patiens, sine tetricitate gravis, sine jactantiâ fortis, sine contumaciâ constans; talem, inquam, mihi monstrato hominem, et eum ego vere MODESTUM VIRUM appellabo. Qui idem si omnes hasce virtutes ad rerum divinarum tractationem conferet, iisque reverentiam addet quæ tremendis religionis nostræ mysteriis debetur, eundem ego MODESTUM salutabo THEOLOGUM: illi assurgam, in illius complexuram, illum exosculabor, illius pectori admovebo meum, arctoque amoris nexu comprimam, donec venerabilem istum characterem menti meæ impressero, exprimendum moribus.*" Such subjects as God's nature, counsels, and government; as man's dependence and freedom, his obligation and destiny; such themes as time and eternity, life and death, sin and holiness, heaven and hell, are not to be justly understood by the proud and self-sufficient. Let men hear and read, "not to contradict and confute, nor blindly to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider." We might almost as well not meditate on divine things at all, as to think in the self-sufficiency of a proud heart. If one has a great idea of him-



self, the presumption is that it is the only great idea he is likely ever to have.

But let not these remarks be misunderstood. Let no theologian cultivate servility of mind. Contempt for the faculties God has given us is as unfriendly to success as self-conceit. Dr. Taylor, of England, gave to his students this wholesome advice :

“I. I do solemnly charge you, in the name of the God of truth, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and before whose judgment-seat you must in no long time appear, that in all your studies and inquiries of a religious nature, present or future, you do constantly, carefully, impartially, and conscientiously attend to evidence, as it lies in the Holy Scriptures, or in the nature of things, and the dictates of reason ; cautiously guarding against the sallies of imagination, and the fallacy of ill-grounded conjecture.

“II. That you admit, embrace, or assent to no principle or sentiment, by me taught or advanced, but only so far as it shall appear to you to be supported and justified by proper evidence from revelation or the reason of things.

“III. That, if any time hereafter, any principle or sentiment, by me taught or advanced, or by you admitted and embraced, shall, upon impartial and faithful examination, appear to you to be dubious or false, you either suspect or totally reject such principle or sentiment.

“IV. That you keep your mind always open to evidence. That you labor to banish from your breasts all prejudice, prepossession, and party zeal. That you study to live in peace and love with all your fellow-Christians, and freely allow to others the unalienable rights of judgment and conscience.”

✓ If any man would be a master in divinity, let him at all hazards maintain *independence of thought and freedom*

*of inquiry.* It is a miserably jejune interpretation of our Lord's prohibition to call any man master, father, or rabbi, that he was forbidding us to give literary titles to men eminent for their learning, age, or services. He designed to warn us against blindly following the opinions of men, as many in his day did. We have but one Master, even Christ. Implicit faith is due to the words of God alone. When he speaks, it is the height of wisdom to bow down our souls, and receive every declaration as true. He who made the mind, has rightful authority over all its powers. But all propositions set forth for our embrace by men, however many, learned, or venerable, are fit matter of inquiry, not only as to their import, but as to their accordance with the truth of God. Let every man cautiously settle and firmly hold all his religious principles. The Bible encourages modesty, not servility of mind. Paul says: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Think for yourself. Be firm as a rock; but be not stubborn as a mule. Embrace truth and yield to evidence. David says: "I have *stuck* unto thy testimonies." In theology, merely human authority can not have too little, as divine authority can not have too much weight. Lord Bacon well says: "Disciples do owe unto masters only a temporal belief, and a suspension of their own judgments, till they are fully instructed, and not an absolute resignation or perpetual captivity." The theologian can not exalt Christ too much. He is King and Prophet. He is God's Son. HEAR HIM. But beware of blindly following any man, any body of men, any school, any Church. In malice be children, but in understanding be men. When a truth is settled, be not easily moved to surrender it, nor even to doubt its truth. And let no one allow himself to be beguiled into a fickleness respecting even the terms of theology. A late writer says: "The progress of language is

uttering aloud against 'them that call evil good and good evil, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.' And in view of the evils which the use of language can produce by weakening or confounding moral distinctions, does it not become the sober, honest, religious portion of the world, to stick to the old terms by which the indignation of men against sin has been conveyed from of old, instead of diluting the power of truth and blunting the edge of reproof by an inoffensive but inane word, which circulates in good society?" What is here said of terms to express our ideas of right and wrong is fully applicable to all religious subjects, and particularly to the terminology of the only sacred science known to men.

There is not a more important qualification of a student of divine things than *profound reverence* for all that is sacred. Seriousness is not enough. Solemnity is necessary, and that united with holy fear. He who jests, he who trifles, he who feels no solemn awe, may well doubt not only his fitness for the sacred office, but also the reality of his piety. When God was about to call Moses, and make him a great prophet, he first appeared to him in the burning bush. And when Moses "turned aside to see," God said, "Draw not nigh hither"—remain at a reverential distance; "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground." "And Moses hid his face." So let every theologian do. Divinity is holy ground. "Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread." "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Two classes of persons commonly show a shocking irreverence for divine things: one is composed of fanatics, the other of the authors or abettors of fundamental heresy. Their tempers lead to their errors, and their errors are best supported by their



temper. Too much solemnity and holy reverence can not be exercised by any who would advance in the knowledge of the truth. In such studies as are essential to the minister of Christ, irreverence is profaneness. God's truth will profit no man who is incurably addicted to levity of mind respecting divine things. Of all dispositions, none is more unfriendly to the successful study of religious truth than a fondness for jesting with sacred things. Luther said: "Whom God would destroy, he first permits to sport with ✓ Scripture." When Pilate said, "What is truth?" he could not have asked a graver question. But his conduct immediately after showed that he could have asked no question in a less reverent state of mind.

In Jewish Bibles the frontispiece has that saying of Jacob upon his vision of God at Bethel: "How dreadful is this ✓ place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" Remarking on this, Owen says: "So we ought to look upon the Word with a holy awe and reverence of the presence of God in it."

In his Judgment of Scripture, Cranmer says: "I would advise you all, that come to the reading or hearing of this book, which is the Word of God, the most precious jewel, and most holy relic that remaineth upon earth, that ye bring with you the fear of God, and that ye do it with all due reverence, and use your knowledge thereof, not to vain glory of frivolous disputation, but to the honor of God, increase of virtue, and edification both of yourselves and others."

It is, I think, Palgrave who says: "It is of great importance that we should resist the temptation, frequently so strong, of annexing a familiar, facetious, or irreverent idea to a Scripture text or a Scripture name. Nor should we hold ourselves guiltless, though we may have been misled by mere negligence or want of reflection. Every person of

good taste will avoid reading a parody or a travesty of a beautiful poem, because the recollection of the degraded likeness will always obtrude itself upon our memories when we wish to derive pleasure from the contemplation of the original. But how much more urgent is the duty by which we are bound to keep the page of the Bible clear of any impression tending to diminish the feeling of habitual respect and reverence toward our Maker's law."

Of all the dispositions requisite to success in the study of religious truth, none is more important than a sincere, constant, and ardent *love of truth*. No qualification is before this. He who loves his own opinions because they are his, or is greatly attached to views which are of high esteem in his sect or party because they are a Shibboleth, is a candidate for shame and error. Without strong love for the truth, no man has ever made any considerable progress in knowledge. It is indispensable. Nothing can compensate for the want of it. It has been a prominent trait of every good man's character. Job says: "I have esteemed the word of his mouth more than my necessary food." David says: "My soul breaketh for the longing it hath unto thy commandments at all times." "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." "I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold." Solomon says: "Buy the truth, and sell it not." "If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Peter says: "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." The love of truth is a sure pledge that God will bless and guide us in our quest after stores of knowledge. When one is ready to "receive the ingrafted word with meekness,"

then it is both easy and pleasant to teach him. This is one of the most pleasing characteristics of those who have been recently and thoroughly regenerated. Genuine young converts greatly love the truth. It is their chief qualification for advancing in discoveries of the way of life and the rule of duty.

Another state of heart very important to the theologian is *patience*, producing caution and deliberation. A hasty spirit is wholly unfriendly to sound learning. The minds of many rush with impetuosity toward conclusions. They seem to be impatient of all delay, or to regard it as a derogation from their just estimate of themselves to ask them to tarry long in the premises of any subject. Yet observation shows that conclusions hastily adopted are often as hastily abandoned. Even if we reach the truth, but in a rash manner, it can hardly be as a pillar of beautiful proportions in our thoughts, nor can we be half so sure that it is truth to be relied on in all exigencies, as if we had reached it by more careful steps. Let reasonable doubts produce uncertainty, and let us suspend our judgments, until time has been given for further prayer and investigation. Such a habit may leave us for a while unsettled about some matters of great interest. Very well. Jesus said: "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." And Paul said: "We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

In all lawful pursuits a *spirit of diligence* is of great importance. Thus spake God of old: "The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth: but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." The Bereans are commended because



they searched the Scriptures *daily*. The great law of acquisition in knowledge is, a little at a time and often repeated. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." Pious men of old have set us a good example in this respect. One says: "Oh, how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day." "Meditation, to the book of revelation, is like the microscope to the book of nature: it is sure to discover new beauties." Many a difficulty is cleared up by diligence, while the slothful finds himself daily plunged into greater embarrassment on many points. Are not theologians of all degrees of culture often tempted to think too high a price, in the way of diligence, toil, and hardship, is exacted of them? But the fact is, that after all that is done to arouse them, many are but half awake. Look at the life of a cadet at the military academy at West Point, and see how much more rigorous his service is than that required in any theological school. He sleeps in the barracks, in a room with one other; at five A.M. in summer, and at half-past five in the winter, the reveille awakens him; he immediately arises, doubles up his blanket and mattress, and places them on the head of his iron bedstead; he studies until seven o'clock; at that hour the drum beats for breakfast, and the cadets fall into rank and proceed to the mess hall. Twenty minutes is the usual time spent at breakfast. Guard mounting takes place at half-past seven, and twenty-four are placed on guard every day. At eight o'clock the bugle sounds, and the recitations commence. At one o'clock the bugle again sounds, the professors dismiss their respective sections, the cadets form ranks opposite the barracks and march to dinner. Between eleven and one a part of the cadets are occupied in riding, and others in fencing, daily. After dinner they have until two o'clock for recreation. At four the bugle sounds, and they go either to battalion or light artillery drill. This exercise

lasts an hour and a half. After that they devote the time to recreation until parade, which takes place at sunset. After parade they form into rank in front of the barracks, and the names of the delinquents are read by an officer of the cadets. Supper comes next, and after supper recreation until eight o'clock, when the bugle sounds to call to quarters, and every cadet must be found in his room within a few minutes at study, and must remain there thus employed until half-past nine. At half-past nine the bugle again sounds; this is called tattoo; and at the drum-taps every cadet must be in bed, having his light extinguished, and must remain there until morning.

Through the months of July and August the cadets are encamped, and during the encampment the instruction is exclusively military. The only furlough allowed to cadets is two months when they are in the third class.

See, too, how officers in the army endure hardness, not only in middle life, but down to old age. Let him who would have religious truth dwell in him richly, spare no pains, but maintain severe habits of thought and inquiry, denying himself all luxuriousness and effeminacy, and subjecting all his powers to a wholesome discipline.

It is no less true that *genuine lively faith* in the divine testimony is essential to any large success in the theologian. It is true that theology may and ought to be taught and studied as a science. Through this process it is quite possible to carry an unbelieving mind. But such a mind will all the time be feeding on forms and losing the substance; it will be gathering shells, and losing the kernels of things. All improving theologians "walk by faith." In proportion as any human character has shone illustriously, it has been remarkable for freedom from blind credulity on the one hand, and on the other from carping skepticism. There never was a truly great, nor any safe mind, that believed

without evidence, or refused to believe upon sufficient evidence. One of the greatest perils in the way of any student of religious truth is just here. The principle of faith is as easily vindicated as any other principle of our nature. The right exercise of it is a solemn duty enjoined by God in many ways. He who does not firmly believe and hold what he has learned of divine truth, will be like a wave of the sea, tossed to and fro, a poor, unstable thing.

It is of the utmost importance to the theologian that he maintain habits of *just moderation* in his judgments of divine things. He whose mind is fond of rank extremes, and who believes that repulsiveness is a mark of truth, will pretty certainly hold and teach error. Any view of divine truth which disinclines those who abound in godly fear and humbleness of mind to admire and adore, is not safe or true. Even the more grand and awful doctrines of divine revelation, when rightly viewed, are well suited to beget thanksgiving and adoration. Yet even these should be taught in the guarded and moderate manner adopted by our wisest theologians. Harsh statements are no mark of unflinching fidelity.

If one would become mighty in the Scriptures and rich in the truth, he must have the spirit and delight in the duty of prayer. No act that man can perform is more capable of full vindication before the bar of reason than that he should pray for divine illumination. His intellectual dependence on God is absolute. Left to himself, he must fatally err. How often did David cry: "Teach me thy statutes." "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." "Give me understanding." "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies." The pious Thomas Boston thus lets us into the secret of much of his success in theological studies: "I spread the Hebrew Bible before God, and cried to the Father, that, for the sake of



his Son, he would by the Spirit shine on it into me, give light into and discover his mind in the Word; that he would give me life, health, strength, time, and inclination to study, and a blessing thereon; that he would teach me how to manage that work, and would pity me as to sleep, having been somewhat bereaved of sleep since I was determined to that work." "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not." Even great poets often open their works by crying for help from God. Thus Milton says :

"And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer  
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me, for thou know'st . . .  
. . . What in me is dark,  
Illumine; what is low, raise and support."

From the life of the venerable Thomas Scott it appears that over every passage of Scripture he has lifted up his heart in prayer. The result is a very remarkable commentary, which has been read with profit by millions of people. McCheyne says: "*Turn the Bible into prayer.* Thus, if you are reading the first Psalm, spread the Bible on the chair before you, and kneel and pray, 'O Lord, give me the blessedness of the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. Let me not stand in the way of sinners. Let me not sit in the seat of the scornful.' This is the best way of learning the meaning of the Bible, and of learning to pray."

In prayer be not faithless, but believing. "The breath of prayer comes from the life of faith." Let your prayer for light and teaching be fervent. "God hears the heart without words; but he never hears words without the heart." "Never expect to go to the throne of grace without having some stumbling-block thrown in your way; Satan hates prayer, and always tries to hinder it."

Bishop Hall, who made such progress in the knowledge of divine things, tells us how he gained by prayer :

“After some whiles meditation, I walk up to my masters and companions, my books ; and sitting down among them with the best contentment, I dare not reach forth my hand to salute any of them, till I have first looked up to heaven, and craved favor of him to whom all my studies are duly referred ; without whom I can neither profit nor labor. After this, after no over great vanity, I call forth those which may best fit my occasions, wherein I am not too scrupulous of age ; sometimes I put myself to school to one of these ancients, whom the Church hath honored with the name of fathers ; whose volumes I confess not to open without a secret reverence of their holiness and gravity ; sometimes to their later doctors, which want nothing but age to make them classical ; always to God’s book : that day is lost, whereof some hours are not improved in those divine monuments ; others I turn over out of choice —these out of duty.”

Let the theologian never forget that religious truth is not merely to fill a niche in his system, nor to furnish the means of entertainment to himself and his friends. It is all intended for practice. It must first be proposed to our minds, then loved, embraced, and finally reduced to practice. Practice makes sure our knowledge in a way that nothing else does. This is true in the exact sciences and in the useful and ornamental arts ; above all is it true in regard to divine things. A malicious mind can not be expected to make rapid progress in an understanding of the boundless mysteries of love. A worldly mind is ill suited to scan the glories of spiritual things. Practice is not only the life of piety, but it is essential to any sure progress in wisdom. There is no greater folly than that which stalks to hell with the lamp of truth burning before it all the

time. Well did David say, "I will keep thy statutes." And Jesus Christ has informed us that practice has much to do with progress in learning, when he says: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." That is a truth illustrated in the life and experience of every converted man. The apostle James also says: "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." How can he understand the place charity should occupy in a system of practical theology, who carries grudges and old hatred in his bosom? How can he know the connection between Christ's poverty and our riches, whose soul is never drawn out to the needy, but trusts in uncertain riches?

Of course the whole spirit and temper of the theologian should be evangelical. A mere legalist in theory is as wide of the truth as he is far from holy living. If Jesus Christ is not the Alpha and the Omega of our theological system, it matters little what else is in it. A "Christless Christianity" is as false in theory as it is powerless in practice. All observation proves this to be so.



## CHAPTER X.

### A MINISTER'S DIFFICULTIES.

MEN are commonly quite ignorant of the trials of their minister. They meet him in social life, and see him joyous or sad like other men. Or they are witnesses of the public exercise of his office, when their opportunities of forming a correct judgment of the life he leads are not favorable. They listen to his conversation and preaching, and it all seems so easy and pleasant that they are apt to conclude that he has few or no difficulties. Is it not a common opinion that, of all men, ministers have the easiest time? Yet is there no greater mistake than this. He who loves ease would do well to seek any other post.

Ministers are men of like passions with others. They have to contend against the same allurements, the same wicked hearts of unbelief, the same spirit of worldliness, the same slothfulness, the same forgetfulness of God, the same tendencies to vanity, self-confidence, levity, moroseness, presumption, discouragement, envy, anger, resentment, duplicity, hardness of heart, uncharitableness, which so afflict other men. They are liable to many weaknesses, errors, mistakes, prejudices, and misconceptions. They are also subject to all the mental conflicts which distress others. They, too, are liable to doubts respecting their personal piety, and often have fears concerning their acceptance at last. Their office is no defense against any of these enemies of human peace. Ryland remarks: "How many are the evils of our hearts! What need do we find of constant watchfulness and earnest prayer for the supply of the Spirit.

Self, the most subtle and dangerous of all our foes, will assume a thousand forms to draw our supreme attention from our Lord. Both the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the mind must be continually opposed and mortified."

Ministers are also bound carefully to perform all the relative duties required of other men. As citizens, they must be exemplary in their submission to the laws of the land. As neighbors, they must be courteous and obliging. As masters, they must be just and kind. As parents, they must maintain authority with tender affection. As husbands, they must be patterns of faithfulness and love. As stewards of a household, they must be careful, provident, and economical, and yet avoid meanness, parsimony, and greediness of filthy lucre. By their calling they are cut off from many pursuits and employments of a profitable nature, which, though lawful, do not comport with their duty to the public. Their support is also generally inadequate to the maintenance of themselves and of those dependent on them. Some have aged, infirm, and indigent parents, and others have helpless little ones thrown upon them by God's providence, and they *must* be cared for; for "if any provide not for his own, and especially those of his own household, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." A conscientious minister will endeavor to meet such demands; but there is great danger lest he be diverted from his official duties by the urgency of claims of this character, and thus fail to accomplish his mission as an ambassador of Christ.

Besides these things, which are common to men, there are difficulties arising from the post which ministers are called to fill. As the servants of Christ they are peculiarly liable to the attacks of human and diabolical malice. Wicked men and devils know that if they could by any means bring the ministry into disrepute, religion would

✓ have but little power in the world. "Pick out the officers" is always a rule with the enemy, when the army of the Dragon is about to assault the Church. The higher in reputation any one is, the more intent is the adversary on his destruction, or at least on his disgrace. So that more fiery darts were aimed at Paul than at many others, because "in labors he was more abundant," and his success and influence were very great. The more God honors one, the more does he permit him to be tried. It was on account of the abundance of the revelations granted to Paul that the messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him, that he might not be exalted above measure. In like manner all God's ministers, in proportion to their standing, are objects of hatred to the wicked. They are tempted, they are slandered, they are persecuted. This world is in no good humor with holiness, with Gospel doctrine, or with the preachers of righteousness.

Of course the falls and apostasies of ministers are sought by their foes. When they go astray there is shouting among their enemies, who have long watched for their halting. And when they go not away from the right path, the wicked often report the worst things concerning them.

Besides, ministers are cut off from many of the common and appointed means of spiritual comfort and edification. Their Sabbath is far from being a day of rest to their bodies. And although there may be spiritual refreshment in some of their public duties, there is often distressing exhaustion of both body and mind. They hear but little preaching. When they are permitted to enjoy that privilege, many suffer greatly from temptations to indulge a critical spirit. Let any vigorous Christian be so situated as to hear but one sermon a month, and how soon will you find him complaining of spirits sunk, of zeal grown languid, and of comforts dead. Yet the majority of ministers do



not hear as many as twelve sermons a year, preached by their brethren. As to their own discourses, all know what a difference there is between preaching and hearing a sermon. To give reproof, instruction, or consolation is very different in its effects on the mind from receiving them. A minister must therefore resort to private reading for those influences which other Christians are allowed to partake of in public preaching. If he always had some one to whom he could look up as an adviser, how happy he would be ; but he is without a pastor. Could he have the watchfulness, admonitions, and counsels of one who would have great influence over him, and who would be faithful to his soul, what a blessing he would esteem it. The people generally, even those who have much experience, seldom say any thing intended for the spiritual good of their pastor. They regard him as beyond the reach of their wisdom and attainments, and seldom say much to him suited to profit his soul. And ministers are often of little service to each other. They commonly live quite separated ; they are seldom much together ; they do not, perhaps, as much as they should, seek each other's spiritual good. Yet the command is, "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification." Rom. xv., 2. And "thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart ; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Lev. xix., 17.

A cursory view of ministerial duties will show that there must be great danger of formality in performing them. When the time to fulfill an appointment arrives, whether his heart is warm or cold, his affections dull or lively, the preacher must keep his engagement. Many of his duties too are stated and periodical. Many of them too are official, and so he is in danger of going through them in a perfunctory manner. All Christians find how hard it is to

avoid formality in their secret and family devotions. It is of course still more difficult for a minister duly to guard against this languor and dullness in long-continued public service. Yet we all know how criminal and dangerous is the life of a minister spent in sleepiness amid his perishing people.

The office and station of ministers peculiarly expose them to the influence of pride. They are called to be ministers of the humble Jesus. They are bound to preach humility. There is enough in the history of every man to beget lowliness, if he shall but allow it to have its just weight. Yet such is the perverseness of men, such is the deceitfulness of sin, such is the treachery of the heart, that several things pertaining to the sacred office are often perverted to pride, so that nothing but large measures of special grace can keep ministers humble. Special mention may be made of these things: sanctity of office, learning, authority, eloquence, and success, as temptations to pride. The whole history of man shows that there is nothing which furnishes more highly inflammable fuel to pride than sanctity of office.

This was the case with the Scribes and Pharisees, with the priests in heathen temples, and with the false prophets of Israel. This is the case at this day in all heathen countries, and in all systems of false religion. The pride of the priesthood is proverbial. Men call them good, and often think them good, and they are puffed up, when they ought to be humbled in the dust. Learning is always expected in ministers, and most of them are reputed to be more learned than most of their neighbors. Milton says: "The end of learning is to know God, and out of that knowledge to love him, and to imitate him, as we may the nearest, by possessing our souls of true virtue." Yet such is the weakness of poor human nature that it readily perverts so ex-

cellent a gift to the purposes of a foolish pride. One says that "to be proud of learning is the grossest ignorance;" and although this is true, yet he must have had a narrow sphere of observation who has not seen the swellings of the pride of learning.

Authority, and especially spiritual authority, has long been found to be a dangerous possession; yet it belongs to the ministry of the Gospel, and is inseparable from it. Paul, writing to a young minister, said: "Let no man despise thy youth." To another he said: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." To the foregoing add the influence of eloquence, or the power of commanding attention and producing effect by the power of speech. This has always been regarded as one of the most powerful allurements to pride. When to these things we add the influence of some measure of success in the ministry, the danger is still greater. If popularity and the flatteries of men follow a man, and especially if hitherto he has lived in retirement and felt but little of the power of these things, his condition is extremely perilous. Stronger temptations to pride could hardly exist. But if pride reigns, usefulness will cease and ruin will follow. Paul says: "Put not a novice into the ministry, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." This is exceedingly awful language. Let each one consider the solemn and terrible import of those words—"fall into the condemnation of the devil."

Nor are the nature and extent of a minister's studies any sure protection against the dangers which have been mentioned. Few of them are particularly friendly to a devotional frame of mind. Many of them are intricate and abstruse. Others are cold and critical, while others are purely secular, and call for the severest mental disci-



pline and the sternest philosophy. His studies embrace a wide range in science and literature. He should know the speculations of infidels, and the subtleties of philosophy, falsely so called. He ought to know what are the sneers of the ungodly literati, and the objections of men of science. Even his study of the Bible is often to obtain the correct grammatical construction. The people see not the process of their pastor's studies, but only the results; and they infer that every hour of the day must be filled with pleasurable devotion, and that thus the heart of God's servant is all the time undergoing the process of purification. While the truth is that the spirit of devotion is often chilled rather than revived by a whole day's laborious research. Nothing but abounding grace can preserve God's servants in such a state as to promise any personal comfort in religion.

Nor are the duties of the sacred office either few or light. Everlasting consequences hang upon their right performance. Well may the servant of God feel his situation to be awful, whatever be the sacred duty he is called to perform. His way is like the path by which Jonathan and his armor-bearer ascended to the fortress of the Philistines: there is "a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side." There is danger that he will not in his preaching unite the gentleness of Christ with the authority of an ambassador of Christ. He must preach the law in all its rigor, and yet abate nothing of the fullness and freeness of the Gospel. He must hold up precepts and encouragements, promises and threatenings, offers and exhortations, rewards and penalties, faith and works, duty and invitation, privilege and responsibility. He must hold back nothing because he fears it will be distasteful. He must preach nothing because he hopes it will be popular.

In visiting the sick, in his daily intercourse with rich and

poor, with old and young, in dealing with every variety of temper and talent, what need of more than merely human wisdom has the servant of Christ. He must often, in public and private, before the sick and well, the sad and the joyful, state things grievous to others—alarming the secure, searching the self-deceived, holding forth the promises to the penitent, showing men their iniquities, preach Christ to the perishing, and not be deterred by the scoffs and cunning of men. In the government of the Church he must show firmness, impartiality, and kindness, with all good fidelity.

One branch of a minister's duty of a very delicate nature is but little attended to in our day. Reference is had to the many difficult cases of conscience which are continually arising. Casuistry is not a favorite study in this century, yet the cases of difficulty are as numerous now as ever. Upon their correct decision often depend the peace of families, the good name of one or more, and the rights of property, of liberty, and even of life.

Another difficulty in the ministry is discouragement. Most candidates for the sacred office are full of pleasant expectations, and their hearts burn within them to be ready for the field and to enter on their labors; but the time comes, the trial is made, and the work and the success are far different from what was anticipated. They find many of the people fortified behind high walls of prejudice, others are besotted in ignorance of spiritual things, and others are quite indifferent to the whole subject of religion. They care for none of these things. Some, being lewd fellows of the baser sort, endeavor to throw contempt on the whole matter. Some, who profess to love Christ, are found to be carnal in all their tastes and plans. Others are timid, and discourage all zealous endeavors to spread the truth and to bring men to God. Sometimes the most

wicked plots are formed to defeat all attempts to do good. Again, a minister's plans are spoken of contemptuously. One cries, "Ah! Lord God, for he speaketh in parables." Another says, "He hath a devil and is mad." Another cries, "What will this babbler say?" Others say, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods." "Others mocking, revile him." Such has always been the manner in which many have treated the proclamation of the Gospel.<sup>a</sup> Clear and satisfactory conversions seldom occur. ✓ Some professors walk very doubtfully, and some even wickedly. Religion is often so lightly esteemed as not even to provoke inquiry. Old and valuable Christians are going one after another to their rest. Surviving humble Christians often seem disheartened. Their spirits sink. Their hope and courage are almost gone. All things look dark, and seem tending to a yet worse state. If at such a time the minister yields to the influences around him, he will soon become disheartened. Loss of courage will be followed by timidity, and then by despondency. Then his efforts will be few and feeble, and all will come to desolation. If he would but be wide awake, encourage himself in the Lord his God, and throw his whole heart into his work, there would still be reason to expect that God would arise and save his cause and uphold his servant, teaching his hands to war and his fingers to fight. But it is often otherwise. Many a minister is drowned in discouragement. Ryland says: "Verily, I should despair of converting one soul, if he who has commanded us to prophesy unto these slain, had not encouraged us to hope that his Spirit would breathe upon them, that they may live. But if any tinge of despondency should infuse itself into our minds, while we exclaim, '*Who is sufficient for these things?*' let us remember what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the energy of his mighty



power. He who raised up our Lord's body from the grave, and who quickened us, when we ourselves were dead in sins, can impart spiritual life to whomsoever he pleaseth."

It is no wonder that men often tremble at their ordination vows. When one remembers that he stands between the living and the dead, when he hears his awful commission from the mouth of God, when he knows that ere long he must give an account of his stewardship, when he looks at the tremendous weight of responsibility that rests upon him, when he takes a solemn view of his own sinfulness, weakness, and incapacity for his work, and, finally, when he forgets not that while he hopes he is to some the savor of life unto life, he is sure that he is to others the savor of death unto death, he may well exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Cor. ii., 16. As Reed observes: "Our responsibility attaches itself to eternity. This is an awful peculiarity in the functions of the minister. The merchant, if he mistakes in his venture, wastes his estate; the statesman, if he errs in his policy, ruins a kingdom; the minister, if he fails in his duty, damns a soul! In their case the consequences of responsibility are bounded by the good and evil of this life, and in the great judgment it will be forgotten what estates or empires have been lost or won; but in his case the effect will be extreme, everlasting, infinite. The soul must live forever; and will be the wretched and imperishable monument of his negligence, infidelity, and guilt."

Nothing that has been said is designed to make the impression that the work of the ministry is not a good work. It is a good work in itself. It glorifies God. It saves men. It blesses society. It makes life bearable, eternity desirable, and heaven certain to all who believe the messages of mercy.

What has been said should lead every candidate for the

✓ sacred office, and every minister of Christ, to offer much hearty prayer that they may be sustained by divine grace. Many and bitter have been the lamentations of dying ministers. But who ever heard of one lamenting that at any ✓ period of his life he had spent too much time in prayer.

The same views should lead us to ask an interest in the prayers of others. This should not be done in formality, but with pious earnestness. The Epistles to the Thessalonians are from Paul, and Silvanus (or Silas), and Timotheus, all ministers of the Gospel. In the first epistle (v., 25) is this request: "Brethren, pray for us." In the second epistle it is yet more extended: "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." 2 Thess. iii., 1. Surely if such ministers as these desired and asked the prayers of God's servants, those who live in modern times, and are without the extraordinary endowments of primitive times, need a share in the supplications of God's people. And we may well say to the people, that if they would have a rich blessing on their own souls, they can not take a surer way to secure it than to pray fervently for the man who is set over them in the Lord. All Church ✓ history proves that generally the people are much like their religious teachers. If the latter are full of love and zeal, it is sure to produce an effect on the former. Besides, a minister obtained in answer to prayer, and blessed in his labors in answer to prayer, will be a blessing indeed.

## CHAPTER XI.

### VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS.

THE duties of the ministry are exceedingly varied. It is easy to err, and it is hard to walk in the right way. There is one narrow path of duty to every man. But there are thousands of forbidden paths tempting every wayfaring man. Accordingly there are in every calling rules of conduct and suggestions of great importance, upon which it is not necessary to spend much time, and yet they ought not to be omitted. Sometimes, where they are of great weight, they have already been discussed with much ability in works that are before the public, an allusion to which is better than any new discussion is likely to prove. It would be quite unnecessary for any man in our day to give his views on the French infidelity of the eighteenth century. A reference to Robert Hall's incomparable discourse is sufficient to give an understanding of the matter.

In preaching for other denominations, be careful to select such topics as you and they are agreed upon. It is bad manners, and finally injures any cause, to accept the courtesies of others and then abuse their kindness by attacking their peculiarities. This is the more reprehensible as it is commonly quite unnecessary; for between evangelical people of all denominations the differences do not extend to fundamental truths. There is a great extent of ground common to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

In preaching in strange places, avoid singular texts and out-of-the-way topics. That you ought to exchange pulpits with your brethren is very clear. You should do so for



your own sake and for the sake of others. If you are inferior to your brethren, your people will gain by hearing them. If you have better gifts than they, you ought not to nourish in your people a reluctance to hear others. "Ministerial exchanges encourage and strengthen those who are settled in obscure places," says an old pastor. When you thus exchange or at any time preach in another pulpit, you can commonly do your neighbor more good by selecting some plain, and, if you please, hackneyed theme, than by any strange or startling topic which you can discuss. It is old familiar truths that are commonly blessed to men's salvation. It will be very unfortunate if the public get the impression that you are fond of queer subjects.

Always avoid personalities in the pulpit, unless the matter brought forward is one of atrocious wickedness, proper to be noticed, and not likely to come before any civil or ecclesiastical tribunal. During the ministry of Dr. Witherspoon in Princeton, an infamous woman found a seat at the Lord's table, and drank greedily of the wine. Her object in going was notoriously to obtain stimulating drink. The deed was so daring, the wickedness so shocking, and the religious sense of the community so justly offended, that the Doctor preached a sermon on the subject. It may be seen in his works.

Be not distressed if every thing does not grow up around you as by magic. "Soon ripe, soon rotten," is a proverb of great weight in our language. The very speed with which Jacob presented the savory meat to his father awakened suspicion respecting his person and veracity. The winter season strips the trees of their foliage, but adds strength to their trunks and branches. When you see a raw recruit in the Christian army full of himself, and puffed up with ideas of his rapid growth, you may well be alarmed and fear he will not endure. A gourd wound

itself around a lofty palm, and in a few weeks climbed to its very top. "How old mayest thou be?" asked the gourd. "About a hundred years," was the reply. "A hundred years! and no taller! Only look, I have grown as tall as you in less than a hundred *days*," said the gourd. The palm replied, "I know that well. Every summer of my life a gourd has climbed up my body and spread over my branches, as proud as thou art, and as short-lived as thou shalt be." Although gourds grow fast, they are but gourds still. Yet if they did not grow fast, they would not be gourds at all. Let not the modest, humble man, who makes progress in knowledge and usefulness, be cast into sadness and despondency by the ado of noisy boasters, who know not what they are nor what they say. "He giveth grace to the humble; but the full soul he sendeth empty away." Lie low. Beware of pride. Trust to God. Look to Jesus.

Never engage in a system of proselyting from other denominations, nor from other congregations of your own denomination. In the end you will severely smart for it. Right-minded people despise such conduct.

Rightly employ all the members of your church, particularly pious women of good sense. It is probably true that Washington and Bonaparte excelled other men in knowing how to employ the energies of those under their authority more than in possessing any other extraordinary faculty. In our day Spurgeon is even more remarkable for his wise use of the gifts of his congregation than he is for his admirable preaching. "All at work and always at work," is one of the good maxims of Methodism.

You will often be slighted. Let not this dishearten you. Be of good cheer. You serve One who was slighted all his days. Cry mightily to God. Sidney Smith, a poor adviser in many things, but shrewd in others, said: "When

you meet with neglect, let it rouse you to exertion, instead of merely mortifying your pride. Set about lessening those defects which expose you to neglect, and improve those excellences which command attention and respect." Be chiefly grieved that your Master is slighted and his interests neglected. Be not much disturbed by slanderous reports. A big lie, like a big fish on a bank of sand, is not likely to live long. You have trusted your soul to Jesus Christ. Intrust to him the preservation of your character. He will take care of all.

Never write letters from heathen ground or frontier places, reproaching the people among whom you live, however rude or outlandish they may be. Bear with their foibles and awkwardnesses.

In dismissing members to other denominations or churches, be careful to do every thing very pleasantly. It is commonly very painful for pastor and people to separate under any circumstances. Make it not more so by any bad tempers. The same people may again be under your care, or desire to be so. Do nothing to hinder their return. But if you shall never see them again, forget not to behave as a man of God. It is very distressing when ministers forget to be courteous, and tender of the feelings of others.

The following thoughts are from the late Dr. A. Alexander:

"Every place has its own inconveniences and difficulties.

"Heaven is not to be expected in this world.

"External circumstances go but a little way toward making us happy.

"The relief which we receive in our afflictions and distresses has often more real pleasure in it than we experience in our greatest prosperity.

"Little things often disturb our peace as much as great,



and we bear small adversities with less patience than greater, because we do not seek 'grace to help.'"

To his students he often said: "Keep habitually in view the awful importance of the office before you. Cherish assiduously the sincere and ardent love of the truth. Meditate frequently and profoundly on the imbecility of the human intellect. Learn to think for yourselves. Avoid premature judgments and hasty decisions. Avoid at the same time the more dangerous extreme of a skeptical, unsettled state of mind. Lay the foundation deep and solid. Look well to the spiritual condition of your own souls."

Never despise any thing that may increase or lessen your influence. One of the best sermons I ever heard violated many rules of grammar, rhetoric, and elocution; but it was not its violation of rules that made it excellent. Half its blunders would have wholly destroyed the usefulness of a common discourse.

Be a good hearer. Your people will imitate you in the matter of hearing, especially if your example is bad. If you sleep when another is preaching for you, your people will be encouraged to sleep when you yourself preach.

Carefully avoid at all times the character of a fault-finder. Querulousness is not fidelity. To be pleased with nothing may show bad tempers, but will never reform the world. Some men are incurably wicked. Nothing will move them. Do your whole duty, and quietly leave to God the defense of your reputation. If others calumniate and revile, do you practice all meekness and maintain all sweetness of temper.

The late Rev. Charles Simeon thus wrote:

"The longer I live, the more I feel the importance of adhering to the following rules, which I have laid down for myself in relation to such matters:

“1. To hear as little as possible what is to the prejudice of others.

“2. To believe nothing of the kind until I am absolutely forced to it.

“3. Never to drink into the spirit of one who circulates an ill report.

“4. Always to moderate, as far as I can, the unkindness which is expressed toward others.

“5. Always to believe that if the other side were heard, a very different account would be given of the matter.”

Beware of plunging your people into heavy debt by building expensive churches.

Beware of building churches larger than are required for your *ordinary* congregations.

In going into a strange place, letters of introduction are often highly useful, especially in binding over turbulent spirits to keep the peace.

Beware of cultivating the habit of trying to have the last word in discussions in Church Courts, and on all occasions. Avoid the appearance of pugnacity and of pertinacity.

In conducting examinations of candidates for the ministry, beware of the errors so common on such occasions. Ask questions distinctly and precisely. Never smile at the embarrassment of the candidate. Your business there is not to show your acuteness or learning, but to find out if the young man is fit for his work.

Always be the firm friend of Church extension. Very many churches ought to send out *strong* colonies. *Feeble* colonies can do but little. In one of the cities of our country there has not been added to one denomination a new church for more than twenty years, though in that time the population has nearly doubled. Colonizing when proper uniformly improves the vigor of the mother Church. And

there should also be much more promptness in occupying important posts in new fields. We move too slowly. In war, time is every thing.

Pay all you promise. Beware of laxity in money matters. Owe no man any thing but love. Rom. xiii., 8.

In taking up collections, have a collector for each row of seats, so as not to waste time. Let this thing be done expeditiously.

Take good heed of your temporal affairs. Practice rigid economy for conscience' sake, but beware of covetousness. Do not be mean, if you should be poor. Avoid debts. They eat as doth a canker. Guide your affairs with discretion. Psa. cxii., 5. In giving to others adopt the golden rule, and lavish not on others what you would not be willing in the same circumstances to receive. Never let your estimated expenses exceed more than two thirds of your income; for contingents will surely absorb the rest. Try to save something, that at the end of each year you may be able to lay it by in store, or give it away to those who need. Beware of an easy good-nature, that thinks every beggar a good man, and every object very pressing on you. As you would avoid misery and contempt, be careful to set an example of prudence. Yet beware of penuriousness. To the truly deserving, proved to be such, show all kindness; and choose rather to be imposed on sometimes than run the risk of sending away unaided the truly necessitous. "The riches you impart form the only wealth you will always retain. Luther said: "I have had much in my own hand, and lost it all, and saved nothing. But what I have put out of my hands, I have saved." If you have little, be content; if you have a competency, be thankful; if you have an abundance, be humble and bountiful.

Beware of all plagiarism. In 1839, *The Baptist Christian Watchman* published that a minister in Massachusetts



preached three hundred sermons, which he had borrowed from a brother minister; that another man had preached a large part of a sermon without stating that he had copied it from another printed essay; and that three ministers were in the habit of using the lithographic discourses called "The Pulpit." All these cases involve dishonesty. Any sound views in morals must condemn such conduct. Any man who thus practices must lose these four things: 1, habits of invention; 2, self-respect; 3, public confidence as a perfectly fair and honest man; and 4, ability to be extensively useful. Men will not confide in a notorious plagiarist. He can not do much good.

Yet one great object of reading and hearing is to store the mind with the richest variety of valuable thoughts, and to acquire the best methods of expressing them. This is surely sound and clear. If so inclined, learned men in all professions could not say how much of any discourse they ever delivered was purely and originally their own, and how much was learned from others. If we may not use the most apt illustration which occurs to us in discussing a subject without being able to say that it is original, we shall soon find ourselves cut off from all argument and all discourse.

Besides, a large amount of all the knowledge and literature of the world may be pronounced the common property of mankind. Its true origin will perhaps ever remain a secret. Paley's celebrated illustration of a watch is found in the writings of John Howe. Even he claims not to be its author, but probably regarded the idea as exceedingly common. So Hervey's method of attempting to give some idea of the vastness of eternity, by supposing a bird to come every thousand years to take away one particle after another till all is removed, seems to have become common property. It is not at all certain that Hervey first used

this illustration. Now, whatever is common property need not be credited to any particular author. Yet even here it might be well to say that such an illustration has been often used, and not run the risk of impairing confidence in your perfect fairness.

Moreover, it is pedantic and disgusting in any public speaker, and especially in a preacher, to give credit for the most common modes of thought, as is sometimes done. Nor is there so large an amount of common literary property any where as in theology. The text-book, the themes and cases, the doctrines and duties, the promises and threatenings, remain the same from age to age. And as Scripture metaphors may be used without declaring that they are first found in such a sacred writer, so ideas known to all good scholars need not be cited as found in one alone. The poets Milton, Thomson, and Pollok make very free use of Bible figures without any charge of literary theft. The conclusion is, Beware of plagiarism, but beware also of such a dread of the charge of plagiarism as would exclude all but tedious mediocrity of thought. If you wish to establish a point by authority, or if you use the very words of an author, or adopt the minute parts of the plan of a discourse, give credit for all you borrow. But cease all attempts to teach unless you can say something, old or new, which is worthy of the attention of those you address. George Herbert says: "Every man's own is the fittest, readiest, and most savory to him." And Oxenden adds: "A man of tact will turn to account all he knows."

Always put the *full* date of day, month, and year, and of post-office and State, at the *beginning* of every letter and note which you write.

Prepare all your official letters with care, re-writing them at least once.

Never write an anonymous letter; nor be disturbed at receiving one.

Avoid, as far as possible, those weaknesses which diminish respect for character. This will be very difficult. Most men have some great follies about them. The greatest are not exceptions. Tycho Brahe lost his color and trembled at the sight of a fox or hare. Dr. Johnson would never enter a room with his left foot foremost. Julius Cæsar fled to cellars at the sound of thunder. Peter the Great could not be persuaded to cross a bridge. Marshal Saxe screamed at the sight of a cat. Byron would never help any one to salt, nor allow any one to help him to salt. He would leave a table if any salt were spilled during the meal. A clergyman of the last generation could not pray with a dying person if a cat lay sleeping by the fire. Another greatly injured his influence by always wiping on the tablecloth the knives and forks before eating. Early in life is the time to find out and put away our foolish practices. In a minister, far more than in a female, "Temper is every thing." Put off all hatred and malice. Be not irritable. Anger unfits for either study or devotion. "A little jogging puts a clock out of frame: so a little passion the heart. A man can not wrestle with God and wrangle with his neighbor at the same time."

Be sincere, cordial, and warm-hearted. Feel a lively interest in the welfare of all men. Dr. Chalmers says: "There is a set of people whom I can not bear—the pinks of fashionable propriety—whose every word is precise, and whose every movement is unexceptionable; but who, though versed in all the categories of polite behavior, have not a particle of soul or cordiality about them. We allow that their manners may be abundantly correct. There may be elegance in every gesture, and gracefulness in every position, not a smile out of place, and not a step



that would not bear the measurement of the severest scrutiny. This is all very fine; but what I want is the heart and the gayety of social intercourse, the frankness that spreads ease and animation, the eye that speaks affability to all, that chases timidity from every bosom, and tells every man in the company to be confident and happy." To "be courteous" is a solemn duty. To seem to be so is a poor substitute for the reality. All good manners proceed from good feelings, else they are but a sham. The hollow-hearted are almost uniformly detected.

Beware of a criticising spirit. Avoid dejection. Luther writes: "You should not attempt to judge or criticise yourself. It often happens to me that I do, and think how cold it has been. Yet others have afterward commended the same sermon to me."

Get a good tailor. So dress that just people can not say, See that dandy, or, Behold that sloven.

Avoid egotism. Never say "We," when you mean only yourself. See the Life of Dr. E. Porter, pages 276-279.

As far as it can be done without awkwardness, say neither "We" nor "I," if you mean only yourself. Ryle says Whitefield "never used that indefinite expression 'We,' which seems so peculiar to English pulpit oratory, and which leaves a hearer's mind in a state of misty confusion as to the preacher's meaning. He met men face to face, like one who had a message from God to them—like an ambassador with tidings from heaven: 'I have come here to speak to you about your soul.'" Be bold. Be direct. Yet avoid egotism.

The question is often asked, What rule should govern us as to holding protracted meetings? This is a matter that ought not to be carelessly disposed of. Yet the answer need not be tedious. Hold them when they are really called for. But beware of so conducting them as to bring

into disesteem the regular weekly service of the sanctuary. If the people have an ear to hear, do you have a mouth to speak God's Word.

Take care of your health. Read Dr. Warren on the diseases of sedentary men; or Hufiland's Art of Prolonging Life; or Sure Methods of Improving Health and Prolonging Life, by a Physician; or the tenth section of Adam Clarke's Letter to a Preacher.

In his Journal of Health, Hall says: "Riding on horseback immediately after a public address, in damp or rainy weather, or windy weather, even in summer time, is enough to fasten disease on any man of ordinary health.

"As to preaching with the hoarseness of a fresh cold upon him, no man is justifiable under any circumstances short of threatened life.

"After speaking in weather above named, persons should remain in the house at least twenty minutes, then button up and keep the nose and mouth covered."

If God spares your life to old age, do not make yourself stiff and reserved. Let even the children approach you familiarly. Encourage young men to come to you, and put them wholly at ease in your presence. They naturally look to you as friends, as patterns, as counselors. Be ready to help them all you can. It is a great blessing to any church to have in it one man whose presence constantly reminds her of "such a one as Paul the aged." Guard against being a sour or surly old man. Fall not into that common error of the aged, against which the wise man warns in Eccl. vii., 10. Read it.

Govern your meals in a right way. Jerome says that Nepotian always introduced the Scriptures at his own table as a subject of pious conversation.

"It is not the part of a minister of the Gospel at any time to excel in farce or comedy. Leave it to jesters

and buffoons to spread the laugh, and set the table in a roar."

"In every ministerial company, let the reading of the divine Scriptures find a place; for by this souls are built up in that which is good, and needless fables are excluded."—*Council of Toledo*.

Beware of "new truths" in theology. That which is absolutely new in theology, is absolutely worthless. If you think you have made some discovery in divinity, say little about it for a season. You yourself may soon perceive that it is not worthy of further attention. If not, write it down, and lay it aside for six or twelve months, and read it again. You will probably reject it yourself. If it still seems true and important, modestly and clearly state it to some able and judicious divines. They may soon convince you that it is some old heresy, or that it is of no great value. If so, give it up; at least spend no more thought upon it.

Avoid fanatics. There is no deadlier foe to true piety than a headlong and headstrong fanaticism. It will mar good prospects of usefulness any where. Avoid men who serve God with their bad passions. Orton says: "There is no mending wrong heads, especially when they are influenced by what they think a zeal for God, and imagine that their good intentions will justify and even sanctify their imprudence and irregularities." Wild-fire in religion is the worst fire on earth.



## CHAPTER XII.

### PUBLIC WORSHIP—READING, SINGING, PRAYING.

THE exercises of public worship usually embrace the reading of God's Word, singing the songs of Zion, praying, and preaching. Of the last of these a good deal is found in other chapters of this work. Nothing will here be said on that matter. Let us consider the others in order :

I. All Protestant churches commend and practice the reading of God's Word in the great congregation. This is an honor due to Holy Scripture. It was practiced in the worship of the synagogue. Luke iv., 16-20 ; Acts xv., 21. It is commonly recommended in the directories of the churches of Christ. Like other acts of worship, this may be performed in an unedifying manner. Some readers do terribly drawl out the words of Scripture. Others read in a hurried and confused way. Some sadly mumble all they read. Others read with great carelessness. The effect of such reading is pain to pious people, and contempt in the ungodly. Good reading makes an impression corresponding to the matter read. No reading is good which does not give the sense. And one can hardly give the sense, if he does not know what it is. Our accomplished countryman, Dr. John S. Hart, has said : " No writings, if well read, are so impressive, none are so capable of high elocutionary effect, as the Holy Scriptures. Yet of all books that are publicly read for the edification of the people, none ordinarily is read so badly as the Bible. It is not merely that public readers fail to give to words the fullness of power and beauty that is in them. It is not

merely that the reading lacks rhetorical elegance and finish, and that Holy Writ as uttered by such persons ceases to charm and captivate. The Scriptures are often read as one would read a formula in an unknown tongue, whose alphabet and pronunciation he had mastered, but without having the slightest idea of what the words meant, or whether they had any meaning. They are often read with an entire perversion of the meaning.

“I wish to say to all who are required to lead the devotions of others, Give earnest heed to this matter. You may never learn to give to the Scriptures the melting power which they had when coming from the lips of Dr. Mason or Elizabeth Fry. You may not have the natural gifts of voice and intellect, or the opportunities of culture, which those eminent persons had. But there is a certain degree of excellence which you may attain. There are certain faults of manner which you may avoid, if you desire earnestly and truly to give effectiveness to this part of your public duties.

“Study beforehand the passage which you intend to read at the opening. It is no easy matter to find out exactly what is meant, and all that is meant, by the written words of another. We are accustomed in every-day intercourse to leave a great deal of our meaning to be expressed and supplemented by the tone of the voice and by significant gestures and looks. When only the voiceless, inanimate words are before us, it requires for their full comprehension not merely practical skill in verbal and grammatical analysis, but often much historical knowledge, and a vigorous imagination to bring the original circumstances fully and vividly before the mind. In the passage John xx., 16, for instance, when Jesus turns and says ‘Mary!’ it is evidently in a voice of familiar tenderness which says by its very tone, ‘Do you not know me?’ Mary’s ‘Rabboni!’

is in like manner an expression of surprised joyful recognition. A mere study of the words does not bring out the meaning. Imagination must work. The scene must stand clearly out before the mind's eye. Then only will the voice do its office as a true interpreter of this most beautiful passage. Who that ever heard that almost despairing wail with which the venerable Dr. Archibald Alexander used to utter the cry, 'Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani!' but felt that he had received a new revelation of the meaning of that mysterious utterance? It was not that Dr. Alexander understood Hebrew better than thousands of others have done. It was because he had meditated on the subject until he had the whole dreadful scene fully before him."

2 B In reading, the first requisite is to be distinctly heard; the second is, to give the right emphasis, so as to give the true meaning; and the third is, to impress the truth thus taught on the minds of those who hear. These remarks apply with force to the reading of hymns in the worship of God. The manner of reading them is sometimes suited to take away rather than to awaken a devotional feeling.

II. That solemn music is fitly employed in public worship is very clear. To banish singing from God's house is to take an unwarrantable liberty with a divine ordinance. On this matter the Scriptures of both Testaments are decided and explicit. The book of Psalms consists of lyric poetry, was sung in the Hebrew Church, and has been sung during the whole Christian era. Paul calls on the early Christians to edify one another "in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." There is a peculiar fitness in thus honoring God. Music is a very common method of expressing joyfulness and benevolence. Even the gentle and joyous birds of the forest express their delight in songs. Owls, hawks, and ravens never sing. They croak or hoot, and live on prey or carrion. To her babe the mother loves



to sing a lullaby. Malice naturally selects harsh notes for the expression of its sentiments. A growl much more befits a virago or a misanthropist than a musical scale. Nor is the church of God a doleful, though it is a solemn place. With all its solemnity, the worship of Jehovah is full of sacred joy, which should be expressed.

On this point it would be easy to accumulate evidence from the best churches of the past. Chrysostom, speaking of singing, says: "Nothing so lifteth up the soul, so looseth it from the chains of the body, and giveth it a contempt for all earthly things." Augustine says: "How freely was I made to weep by these hymns and spiritual songs, transported by the voice of the congregation sweetly singing; the melody of their voices filled my ear, and divine truth was poured into my heart. Then burned the flame of sacred devotion in my soul, and gushing tears flowed from my eyes, as well they might."

In a letter, dated March 6, 1560, Bishop Jewell says: "A change now appears among the people, which nothing promotes more than to sing psalms. Sometimes at Paul's Cross there will be six thousand people singing together." And Bishop Burnet says that "the Psalms, translated into metre, were much sung by all who loved the Reformation, and it was a sign by which men's affections to that work were measured, whether they used to sing them or not."

Singing should be so managed as to allow the great body of worshipers to unite in it. Leaders and choirs are intolerable, when they so conduct this part of religious service as to exclude from it the great mass of the people. No monopoly of this branch of worship is admissible.

Church music should be solemn and simple. It should be lively, but not frivolous. It should not be highly artistic, but easily learned and easily followed by all who have good ears for music.

It is a great evil that new tunes and new harmonies should be constantly thrust upon the people. The old are better, at least for this reason—they are known, and can be sung by the people.

It is very important that a minister have good taste and correct views on this whole subject. If he is quite deficient, some officious person will probably introduce a style of singing highly objectionable. In times of high religious excitement, as well as in times of great formality, there is great peril on this point. Let no man feel that any thing which affects the dignity of God's worship and the edification of his people is of slight importance.

Who shall control this business? The rules and usages of different churches commonly intrust it to those who control the spiritual interests of churches. Of course, the pastor of each church is likely to have a large influence in the matter. This shows the vast importance of his having his own tastes and talents in music somewhat cultivated. A low, vulgar taste in this matter will do much harm. Not only in times of religious excitement, but in times of great coldness, a style of singing, unsuited to the house of God, is often brought in, first perhaps by stealth, then publicly. This is no trifle. Whatever affects the dignity of God's worship and the edification of his people can not be unimportant. If a minister's skill in music, and if his voice and strength would permit, no more proper person could be selected as leader than the pastor himself. In a few cases this has been done, but it makes the services of the sanctuary very severe on the pastor. Because it endangers his ministry, he ought commonly to avoid it. Another plan is to select some one fit for the service, and let him take his position in front of the pulpit. If he has a good voice, and can secure the aid of a few good voices near him, this is virtually a choir, and answers all the val-

uable ends of a choir. But more commonly there is a select choir, with a chosen leader, placed at the end of the church opposite the pulpit, and in the gallery, if there is one.

Singing in church is a very difficult matter to manage aright. It has long been so. In the course of your reading and observation you will find how true this is. Job Orton, in a letter to a young curate, says: "I am sorry for the trouble and vexation you have had, and are likely to have, with your eccentric singers. They are in general conceited, troublesome fellows, and have no more religion than an organ or a fiddle. And I wish the Doctor, when he comes to you, may be able to bring them to order. But steadiness, and not yielding to them, is the only way to humble them. 'Tu ne cede malis; sed contra audentior ito.' I would propose, in the mean time, that you talk calmly and seriously to them separately, and endeavor to give them better notions than they have of the nature and design of psalmody; and particularly urge upon their consciences a reverence for the presence of God; and how affronting it must be to him to have the church turned into a theatre, and divine worship into a farce. I know nothing more likely to shame and reform them." This is but a specimen of the complaints that are even now made in many places on the subject. Great prudence and vigilance are necessary to avoid serious evils proceeding from choirs. The following suggestions, if followed, will effectually prevent the worst of them:

1. Let not the proper authorities ever give up the matter to others. They may not be musical, but they may yet know that certain things are unedifying. They are charged with maintaining the gravity and decency of God's worship. They can not divest themselves of the responsibility under which they act.



2. If possible, secure for a leader a man of serious and earnest piety. This will of itself set aside half the difficulties in the case. His example and influence will do much good. The more pious persons there are in the choir, the better. Yet it often happens that a choir is composed in chief part or wholly of non-professors at the first, and soon they are brought to deep concern about their salvation. The essential points to be gained are the gravity and decency of divine worship.

3. Often state that the great object of any arrangements respecting a leader or a choir is to bring the congregation as far as possible to unite in this delightful service. Congregational singing is the point to be gained. Whatever hinders success in this is wrong and must be broken up. Whenever a few are allowed in any way to monopolize the singing of God's house, trouble begins. The better sort of Christians will be dissatisfied, and they ought to be. This monopoly is brought about sometimes by actual suggestions to the people that they are not expected to sing. More frequently it is effected by employing only new, difficult, and highly artistic tunes, wholly unknown to the majority of the people, and often wholly unfit for public worship. The object never being to display the skill of the choir, nor to show what proficiency it has made, but only to worship God in an acceptable and edifying manner, tunes that are absolutely new to the majority of the people should not usually be introduced into the congregation, but should first be sung in private, in families, etc., until they can be brought forward to advantage. And here it may be said that very many tunes are not necessary. In the best days of the Church of Scotland, the tunes used in public worship were in number less than thirty. In some churches in our country, where this part of worship is conducted in a very edifying and delightful manner, the num-

ber of tunes used for all metres does not exceed fifty or sixty. As to very difficult and highly artistic pieces of music, they are wholly unsuited to the house of God. It is not wise to proscribe every tune that has in it a solo or a fugue; but it is right that they should be introduced sparingly.

To induce a congregation to sing, the pastor should explain the obligation resting on the people to meet for the purpose of practicing. Whenever it can be done, singing in family worship should be encouraged. Great attention should be paid to the children and young people in this matter. Good teachers of music should be sought out and commended to the public patronage. The whole matter should be treated not as an attempt merely to promote the accomplishments of the people, but their salvation, and the glory of their God and Saviour. A good man can in no way more surely honor God. "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth thee." Archbishop Secker says: "All persons who are by nature qualified, ought to learn, and constantly join to glorify him that made them, in psalms and spiritual songs. This was the practice of the early Christians; it was restored very justly at the Reformation, and hath declined of late, within most of our memories, very unhappily. For the improvements made by a few in Church music, were they real improvements, will seldom equal the harmony of a general chorus, in which any lesser dissonances are quite lost; and it is something inexpressibly elevating to hear 'the voice of a great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders,' to speak in the words of Scripture, 'making a joyful noise to the God of their salvation, and singing his praises with understanding.'"

It would greatly conduce to harmony in singing if the same hymn or psalm were sung to the same tune for a few

✓ successive weeks, until the ears of the people became familiar with the air and the words also. But this should not be carried to an extreme. One of the old divines in England gave out the 100th Psalm every Sabbath morning, and some of our own ministers have used a favorite hymn at every public service. This is going further than is advisable. But it is well to familiarize the people with a few at first, and with more afterward.

Our country has lately sustained a great loss in the death of Dr. Lowell Mason, whose taste, piety, and judgment exerted a wide and happy influence in Church music. In a private letter to the author, he said: "I suppose the very first thing called for in the exercise of singing in public worship is the *united effort of all* the people. A choir service may be well in its place—is to be desired—but first, and as the basis of the whole, comes the song of all the people. In urging this point, I make no allowance for a supposed want of talent, and of course none for a want of musical knowledge. I hold that all have the faculty—that all may who will unite in this service. It is not necessary for any one to wait until he knows the notes—this is no more necessary than it is for one to wait for true piety until he knows letters. Let a man begin at once in either case, and ordinarily knowledge will soon follow. The people have now to a great extent lost the habit; and at the same time the habit has been formed of listening to the singing of others. To break up wrong habits and to establish right ones is what we need. One of the essentials to congregational singing is that simple, easy tunes be used. I do not hesitate to give it as my opinion that there are but *very few* tunes simple enough for common use. Tunes too difficult for congregations have been introduced and sung by choirs, so that they are somewhat known, and therefore the people try them; but yet they are too difficult, and a



good effect can not be produced by them. A perfect simplicity must pervade the whole if we would have it successful."

If this branch of worship is so conducted as to be edifying, decent, and orderly (1 Cor. xiv., 26, 40), we are not restricted by any other divine regulations. In the preface to Ainsworth's Psalms, the author says: "Tunes for the Psalmes, I find none set of God; so that each people is to use the most grave, decent, and comfortable manner of singing that they know." Let not men, under any pretext, take away the comfortable liberty Christ has given his people on this or any other subject.

That congregational singing is not only practicable but effective is proved at Dr. Hall's church in New York, and at Mr. Spurgeon's church in London. In his Musical Letters, Mr. Mason says: "Go with me to the Nicolai Church in Leipsic, and look down from the upper gallery upon a congregation of fifteen hundred or two thousand persons; see them with hymn-books open, apparently unconscious of those around; listen to their rough and uncultivated voices, *in* time and tune, or *out* of time and tune, joining with the loud pealings of the deep diapasons, rolling through the arches of the great building, and filling the whole with a mighty chorus of sound; mark the movings of your own spirit, and you will not need an answer to the question from another."

One great means of encouraging and improving singing in public worship is singing in family devotions. When Baxter was pastor at Kidderminster, there was not a single house in one of the longest streets where the voice of praise was not daily heard. The *Scottish Free Church Record* says: "Scotland could once boast the day when the voice of praise ascended from almost every hearth. How seldom that sound is now heard by the passer-by, which, some one

has remarked, was like the scarlet thread hung out on the walls of Jericho to bear witness that God was acknowledged in that house. Philip Henry says: 'Those do well that pray morning and evening in their families; those do better who pray and read the Scriptures; but those do best of all who pray, and read, and sing psalms.' Nothing tends more to enliven family worship, and render it interesting, than singing; and the influence of the music may long endure when youthful associations are recalled in after years. By the introduction of this practice among his children and domestics, the head of a house has peculiar opportunities of aiding in the revival of sacred music; it is productive of many advantages both to the members of the family and to the Church at large, and an interest in psalmody is excited which would extend to public occasions."

Oh, that in every house was daily heard a tuneful song of praise!

"Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,  
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name."

III. Praying is a very important part of public worship. It embraces adoration, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, intercession, and filling our mouths with arguments before God in behalf of our requests. The subject of prayer is mentioned in God's Word more than five hundred times. Prayer is practiced under every form of religion known in the world. It seems to be taught by natural religion.

What we have now to consider is the most edifying manner of conducting public prayer.

It is true that when the heart is right the efficacy of prayer does not depend on the words employed in offering it; and yet, for the sake of the plain part of the assembly,

the words used should commonly be simple and easily understood. A scriptural phraseology is usually the best. ✓ It is very desirable also that there should be fluency (not flippancy) in prayer. Hesitancy distracts or diverts attention from the substance of what is offered. Nor should prayers be tedious. The Bible fixes no rule. Some public prayers are not too long at fifteen or twenty minutes. Yet the longest prayer recorded in the Bible can be solemnly and deliberately repeated in eight or nine minutes. It covers fifty-one verses of Scripture, and is found in the eighth chapter of 1 Kings. The Scriptures forbid vain repetitions, though they do not forbid all repetitions. The Pharisee's prayer was much longer than that of the publican. In secret, all but mere formalists commonly quit ✓ when they have said what was in their heart. There is seldom an inclination to make secret prayers too long. But the Pharisees used to offer their personal devotions in public, and pray by the hour. They were led on by the love of human applause. They had their reward.

Some prayers, not very long, are tedious, because there is little or no variety in them, or because they often create the impression that they are drawing to a close; but he who is offering them has some new view, and branches out, as it were, in all directions.

We sin, when we make light of those who are much exercised in prayer (1 Sam. i., 14); when we lose our interest in prayers because they are not eloquent; when our prayers are hasty, rash, lacking thoughtfulness and abounding in words. Ecc. v., 1-3; x., 14.

It is freely admitted that no rules can impart to us the spirit of prayer, or that no outward propriety can compensate for the want of a spirit of devotion. And yet good rules and hints may enable us to escape some serious errors.



Avoid all cant phrases. They pall upon the ear.

✓ Never use the name of God, as an expletive, to fill up a sentence. It borders on profanity.

While a noisy and boisterous manner is unfriendly to serious worship, yet he who would so lead the devotions of others as to secure joint worship must speak audibly and distinctly.

In a large assembly and on ordinary occasions, prayer should be copious and comprehensive. It should embrace all those topics on which the necessities of the people would lead them to cry unto God.

✓ It is very desirable that sameness in public prayer should be avoided. In some places the people complain that they find no variety in the modes of expression, and that the public prayers might as well be printed, for they are the same the year round. It is very different in Scripture. There we find a delightful variety. Two eminent ministers of the nineteenth century are said always to have begun their public prayers thus: "O Lord, our heavenly Father." Another is said to have uniformly begun his public prayers with the word "We." Another uniformly closed his prayers with the last verse of Psalm xix, in the plural form. Another was said to use no other name of the Most High but God; and another, Our Father.

One part of public worship is doxology. Some ministers never use any but a metrical doxology. Yet the Scripture has many doxologies, even in the New Testament. See Rom. xvi., 25-27; Eph. i., 3-6; iii., 20, 21; 1 Tim. i., 17; 1 Pet. v., 11; 2 Pet. iii., 18; Jude 24, 25; Rev. i., 5, 6; iv., 11; v., 12, 13; vii., 12.

It is very desirable that in public prayer those who lead the devotions of others should use words in their pure classical meaning. Among verbs, how often are "solemnize" and "realize" used in a slang sense. How many prayers

are sadly deficient in unction by the constant recurrence of the word *may* at the beginning of each petition. Our English Bible is our purest classic; and not one of its petitions or benedictions begins with *may*.

It is also in bad taste to begin to quote a passage of Scripture in prayer, and then to terminate the sentence in some conceit or expression of our own.

To pray that we may make a Sabbath-day's journey toward the kingdom of heaven, is to pray that we may make very little progress heavenward; and this is just the opposite of what is meant by those who heedlessly use the petition. Dr. Watts says: "If we indulge in the use of dark sentences in our speaking to God, we might as well pray in an unknown tongue, which was so much disapproved by the apostle. 1 Cor. xiv., 9. Let not the pomp and sound of any hard Hebrew names or obscure phrase in Scripture allure us to be fond of them in social prayer, even though we ourselves should know the meaning of them, lest we confound the thoughts of our fellow-worshippers."

In prayer, the following things are an offense against good sense and good taste:

One is a form of speech that looks as if we were attempting to give information to the Almighty, and so to spend much time as if we were addressing an ignorant being. Some seem to feel the impropriety of such speech, and to save themselves they say, "Thou knowest." But this is generally felt to be awkward.

Having preached a sermon, some ministers preach it over again in the prayer that follows; and indeed some prayers are more addressed to the people than to God. This ought not to be. Dr. Watts says: "Some persons, who affect long prayers, are greatly faulty in this respect; they are speaking to the people and teaching them the

doctrines of religion, and the mind and will of God, rather than speaking to God the desires of their own mind. They wander away from God to speak to men. But this is quite contrary to the nature of prayer."

✓ Is it, then, best to study our prayers, and even at times to write them? The answer to this question may easily be abused. Perhaps all serious persons will agree that the mind of him who leads the devotions of others should have a deep and awful sense of the presence of God, and of the glory and importance of the business in hand. Surely, then, he ought not to be hasty to utter any thing before God. His words should be few and well ordered. This requires thought and care. And as some men know not how loose and disconnected their thoughts are till they see them in writing or in print, so the rambling character of many an address to the Almighty would be cured if it had been written with any care. Dr. Chalmers wrote ✓ many of his prayers even for his class-room.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### PUBLIC WORSHIP—WHO SHALL ATTEND?

SOME forms of false religion may well be propagated by old wives around the hearth alone. But a religion which proves its divine origin by the sublimity and wide range of its views, by its just power over man's social character, and by a worship at all becoming the glory and majesty of God, must require public assemblies also. A discourse well prepared can ordinarily be delivered to many hundreds with more pleasure and profit than to one or a dozen. Many mercies common to a community demand a common acknowledgment. Many sins chargeable to all should be confessed by all. Common supplications suited to all are manifestly proper. Accordingly, under every dispensation, God has enjoined acts of united public worship. Nor is any ordinance of God more kind, or better suited to our real wants. If the Gospel was silent on such a subject, the truly pious and intelligent Christian would find his heart inclining him to the assemblies of the saints. If there was no command on the subject, the devout would wish there had been, for public worship greatly enlivens them, and cheers them in their pilgrimage. This is a matter of very great importance.

I. Who ought to attend the house of God? None will deny that many passages of the Word of God oblige *Christians* to assemble together. They are frequently and specially addressed. This is clear. But a Christian is one who is savingly enlightened. If he should go to the house of God, why should not the man who has his understanding

darkened, and who lives in ignorance of God, and destitute of all saving light? The Christian is a pardoned man. Should not the sinner, who is a condemned man, go and seek pardon? The Christian is already on his march to glory. The sinner is in the road to hell. If the house of God has any aptness to fit men for heaven, the sinner, even more than the saint, needs that influence on his heart and life. In short, almost every thing urging the child of God to visit the house of God, still more clearly urges the man of the world to be there. The saint and sinner then should both come.

The rich and the poor should both come: the rich that he may humble himself before God, and not forget the wants and miseries of his soul; the poor that he may forget the toils and miseries of life, and learn to hope for a better country and portion than he has upon earth. As the doctrines and worship of the Gospel greatly abase pride, and give salutary warning to all who are ever tempted to be haughty, so they also lift up those who are bowed down, and give the best alleviation to the multiplied sorrows of the poor. If any esteems himself neither rich nor poor, he should surely set an example of gratitude and piety to all around him for so distinguished a favor. He is in worldly affairs more highly blessed than either the very rich or the abject poor, and should at all times show how tender is his heart, and how grateful is his estimate of God's loving kindness.

The learned and the unlearned should alike visit the house of God. In most Protestant churches, the services are so arranged as well to suit the ignorant. A discourse, the object of which is to expound and enforce the will of God on some great truth, is commonly delivered, and so the unlearned may gain light and instruction. Any mode of worship or teaching which excludes the unlearned from

its benefits can not be according to the mind of God. They should be there. So ought the learned, even if they know more than their teacher. For, *first*, they owe much in the way of example to the rest of the community. *Secondly*, though the preacher may say nothing which they had not heard before, yet it is eminently useful to be reminded of truths quite familiar to us. Indeed, this is, in Christian countries, one of the greatest advantages of public worship and instruction. *Thirdly*, a man must have a very remarkable amount of knowledge, or a very stupid preacher, who does not often find suggested to his mind trains of profitable thought, which he never would have had except in the house of God. *Lastly*, however vast any one's learning, he is in comparison with God a poor creature, and in the sight of God a poor sinner, and it is right that he should humble himself in the dust both publicly and privately before his Maker.

In our day and country there is much practical necessity for right views of another matter: It is whether foreigners who know little or nothing of our language should be encouraged and persuaded to attend our churches? In reply, it may be stated, first, that, so far as we can, we should supply them with preaching and worship in their own language until they can understand ours. Yet very little can be done in this way. We have but few men who can preach and pray to edification except in one language. Therefore, secondly, all persons expecting to make this country their permanent home should be encouraged to learn, and to cause their children to learn our language. The effort to maintain a general knowledge of any other than the English language in this land is preposterous. It can not be done. The sooner every man learns the English language, the better for him and for his children. If I should remove with a view to a permanent residence in



Bremen or Berlin, I should instantly commence to learn, and have all my family taught the German language. Thirdly, in no way can people learn a language more rapidly than by hearing it used by good speakers, conducting the services in a religious assembly. Some foreigners have declared themselves more indebted to a minister of the Gospel, who spoke distinctly and deliberately, than to any other means used for acquiring our language. As the English Bible is the best standard of the English language, so the proper use of our language in the house of God affords the best facilities for learning it. It is also true that there are some great advantages in hearing religious truth published in idioms, and even in languages, with which we have not been perfectly familiar all our days. Thus many scholars prefer reading theology in Latin rather than in their vernacular tongue. They say that their attention is kept more closely to the subject, and that they remember it better. The conclusion then is, go to the house of God, where truth is preached, even if you understand but little at first. You may soon learn something. By diligence, you will in time learn much.

The question is sometimes asked whether deaf mutes should be encouraged to go to the house of God. Where there is no service specially designed for them in the sign language, they should go with others to the ordinary church. They can hear nothing, it is true. But, when educated, they can read the hymns sung and the chapters of the Bible read. Many of them by long use can tell from the motions of the preacher's lips many things said. Their attendance in church naturally leads to many inquiries at home. I am confirmed in these views by a few cases of piety known to me among this class of unfortunates. They felt it a great privilege to be at church with others. It was God's house. They loved it for that rea-

son. These remarks apply with great force to the case of those aged persons who have become too deaf to hear much, if any thing, that is said. All persons who are somewhat deaf, but yet can hear something, should have seats near the pulpit.

Children also should early be brought to church. As this is a very important subject, listen to some of the many reasons that might be given :

1. Many a congregation that looks thin would become large in appearance if all the children belonging to it were present. It is very important to have full houses, when we open our churches at all. It adds much to the liveliness of the scene.

2. It always animates a pious minister to see many children around him when he speaks of divine things. No good man can fail to be impressed by it. It suggests many useful thoughts to lively preachers.

3. It is customary with all heathen people to carry their children very early to their temples, that they may learn the first lessons of their religion ; and shall not we equal them in zeal ? Shall not we labor as assiduously to impress *truth* on the minds of our children as they do to teach theirs error ?

5. Instead of its being irksome to a well-trained child to go to church, it is really a relief. It thus escapes long confinement at home. It is good for its health, temper, and character to go to church.

5. It gratifies children's natural love of society to visit the church. Here is a great society met, and all engaged in the same exercises. Before and after the religious exercises, they often exchange a look or a word of kindness with some relative or neighbor's child. This is both lawful and pleasing.

6. Singing is even more pleasing to children than to

adults. As it was benevolent in God to permit us to worship him in song, so it is benevolent in us to let our children unite in these songs, both in hearing them, and in singing them also.

7. Nor is this all. What is sung in church is commonly in poetry. Much of it is the best poetry in our language. By being both read from the pulpit and sung by the congregation, a portion of it is apt to be impressed on the memory, especially as the same psalms and hymns are often repeated. But should not a stanza or a couplet be remembered, yet the use of it improves and gratifies the taste, and often deeply impresses the heart. The love of poetry is lawful. God consulted our natures in giving us much poetry in the Bible. We may therefore safely encourage this taste in sacred lyrics.

8. There is much that is lovely in the orderly public worship of God's house. "*How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts.*" A Christian assembly brings old and young, rich and poor, neighbors and strangers, friends and often enemies together. It is one of the most dignified and lovely sights on earth. A child can see, at least it can feel, the loveliness of the scene to some extent. Why not gratify it?

9. Besides, who can tell how much is learned even by small children at the house of God? In some cases, all that children know of divine things they learn there. I have often seen the parent listless under preaching, and the little child in the same pew all eagerness and attention. I remember parts of sermons which I heard when I was barely able to walk a mile or two to church. The modern revival of popular lectures is another testimony of the wisdom of the institution of preaching as a means both of instructing and impressing all classes of people, and especially the young.



As to religious instruction, there is no substitute for the pulpit. The fireside and the Sabbath-school may be, and are, great auxiliaries; but without the pulpit they have little power compared with what they have with it.

10. Children have fears and sorrows, as great to them as those of adults are to them. These should be explained, and proper antidotes presented. Where is a child so likely to learn as in the house of God the proper answer to these questions: "Why must I die?" "Can I be saved, and, if so, how?" "Who am I?" "What am I?" "Where am I going?" "What is my destiny?" "What is my duty?"

11. The house of God is one of the best types of heaven and of its worship. Here, as in heaven, God and redemption are often spoken of in becoming terms. Here acts of humility and reverence are constantly performed. Here are indulged no displays of evil passions. Here at least seem to be love to God and good-will to men. How important early to fill the minds of our little ones with such ideas, and let them know that this, above all others on earth, is a scene like heaven.

12. Why should we not also hope and pray that our little ones here in the house of God may be converted? There have been many pious children. The blessed Redeemer loves to win the hearts of the young. He says: "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." He says: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," whatever be his age. He says to all: "Hear, and your soul shall live."

13. Those who are opposed to children's going to the house of God and joining in its worship are like the worst men we read of in the Bible, and not like the blessed Saviour. In Matt. xxi., 15, 16, are these words: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the Temple, and saying,

Hosanna to the Son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

As to the age at which children should first be regularly carried to church, something of course depends upon their health, their temper, and their habits; but they should be brought so soon as they can without cruelty be taught to be quiet. These remarks are seasonable, and something like them might well be spoken in every congregation. Let all ministers respectfully and affectionately ask that their *little* friends, the dear little children, may be allowed to join as often as possible in public worship. They are the hope of the Church and of the country.

II. Having shown who ought to attend our Christian assemblies, a second point is to inquire *when and how often such assemblies should be held.*

In this matter we are happily furnished with clear instructions on at least one point. Those who have any reverence for the Bible admit that all persons, so far as they can, should visit the house of God every Sabbath morning. This is so generally conceded that very few have any doubt on the subject. A man must first avow himself an infidel before he can consistently hesitate to admit this. Protestants and Papists, Orthodox and Heretics, in all this land, hold as much as this. Even in Neologizing churches in Europe thus much is taught. It will not, therefore, be necessary to argue the point. Yet many concede a principle who seldom observe it, and many others pay only such attention to it as comports with their convenience. How few regard themselves as much bound to be in their pews as they think the preacher bound to be in the pulpit. Many a pastor would be dismissed for failing six times a

year to be in his place, if he could assign no better reason for absence than is given by many who are absent twelve times a year from their pews. If the pastor is bound to study ✓ and preach, the people are bound to come and hear. Slight causes should not hinder us from going to the sanctuary every Sabbath morning. Do not all agree to that?

Now let it be asked, what valid reason can be given for observing in a religious manner the first part of the Sabbath-day, which does not bind us equally to observe in the same way the last half of it? To suit the practice of some, the fourth commandment should be so altered as to read: Remember the Sabbath-day to keep half of it holy. Did God sanctify and bless the Sabbath-day? He sanctified and blessed the *whole* of it. Religiously to observe a part, and slight the rest, would show a mind and heart strangely contradictory. Indeed, it can not possibly be done. Those who seem to do it only show that they have too much conscience to live wholly as infidels, but too little to live as true Christians.

In reply to the question whether churches should ordinarily be open three times a day, there can not be much doubt. For, *first*, three public services, of the ordinary length, conducted by one man alone, would soon destroy the life of nine men out of ten. As it is, the clergy of our cities and towns are among the most short-lived of the temperate portion of the community. *Secondly*, although a few persons of great bodily vigor might be profited by regularly attending thrice on the Lord's day, yet that is not true of the mass of any congregation. Experience clearly shows that most persons are more profited by two than by three services. In a city or large town the hale can always find a third service in some sister church, if they find it pleasant to go. There are such in every large congregation. Let them profit by every means in their power. But,



*thirdly*, a portion of every Lord's day should be given by parents and heads of families to the special business of instructing their children and servants. This duty must be performed hurriedly, or they must ordinarily attend but two services on each Lord's day. This duty of regular family instruction on the Lord's day can not be overestimated in its happy influence. Show me a family that habitually neglects it, and I will in nearly all cases show you children growing up in irreligion, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from God and salvation. Whether Christian congregations should assemble morning and afternoon, or morning and night, must be determined by reference to points of expediency peculiar to each people. With some the evening is preferred to the afternoon, first, because most other churches are open morning and afternoon, and it is pleasant to many to mingle with their brethren in their afternoon worship, and have them go in return to an evening service. Secondly, as it is ordinarily convenient to some people to attend in the evening, so there seems to be a preference for that hour. Thirdly, there has long been observed a great advantage in evening worship in the power it has over the mind. Every thing is commonly more still, and people usually go from the house of God to their chambers, and do not seem to lose so soon any proper sense of divine things.

But, besides the Sabbath-day, ought not the people to be called together at least once during the week? This is a grave matter. In reply, it may be stated that, while the sacred Scriptures do not enjoin it as they do the observance of the Sabbath, yet they do not discourage it. Nay more, they say many things to encourage it. Besides, there is seldom such a thing known in any town in the land as a flourishing church without at least one weekly lecture. If all esteemed this privilege as highly as they ought, every

church and congregation would have been larger and stronger than it is. Some, who are not communicants, often set a very praiseworthy example in this behalf. It would be pleasant to be able to say as much of all who meet on the Sabbath.

III. Much depends on the spirit and temper with which men assemble together to worship God, and to hear his Word. In the language of the pious Fletcher of Madely, exhort men thus :

“1. Endeavor to improve daily under the ministry which Providence blesses you with. Be careful to attend to it with diligence, faith, and prayer. When one comes to offer you peace and pardon, strength and comfort, in the name of God, should you slight the glorious message, or hear it as if it were nothing to you, and as if you heard it not? See, then, that you never come from a sermon without being more deeply convinced of sin and righteousness.

“2. Use more prayer before you go to church. Consider that your next appearance there may be in a coffin. Entreat the Lord to give you now so to hunger and thirst after righteousness that you may be filled.

“3. When you are under the Word, beware of sitting as judges and not as criminals. Many judge the manner, matter, voice, and person of the preacher. You, perhaps, judge all the congregation, when you should judge yourselves worthy of eternal death; and yet worthy of eternal life, through the worthiness of him who stood and was condemned at Pilate's bar for you. The moment you have done crying to God, as *guilty* criminals, or thanking Christ, as *reprieved* criminals, you have reason to think that this advice is leveled at you.

“4. When you have used a means of grace, and do not find yourselves sensibly quickened, let it be a matter of deep humiliation to you. For want of repenting of their

unbelief and hardness of heart, some render themselves as insensible as stones."

As to the public worship of God, it is specially binding on us to see that it be not only decent and grave, but that it be solemn, reverential, intelligent, and spiritual. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few." Eccl. v., 1, 2. "The true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John iv., 23, 24. "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." 1 Cor. xiv., 15.

All acceptable worship must be sincere, intelligent, divinely appointed, hearty, and spiritual.

IV. A few brief considerations, intended to persuade men not to neglect the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is, may here be fitly mentioned.

1. First of all, public worship and the public preaching of the Gospel are God's ordinances. To slight them is contempt of him. He commands us to inquire in his temple. Not to do it is rebellion. What adds to the guilt of such rebellion is that it is committed with deliberation; that the bad example is likely to be followed by others; that it is an act of direct insult to God himself; that it is not only contrary to the whole spirit of the Gospel and the example of the saints in every age, but contrary to the very letter of God's Word; that it slights the very means of salvation, and all the tender mercies of God; and, lastly, that it is



done on that sacred day which God has hallowed by his oft-repeated command and by his own exalted example. Let all men see and know that such sin must be heinous in the sight of God.

2. The business for which Christian congregations assemble is the most weighty and solemn. Man's dying moment will not be surrounded with more responsibility than the moment of health, when in the house of God salvation is offered him through the blood of Jesus. Peace and mercy are here urged on men by the Lord. If ever the tabernacle of God is with men, it is in the sanctuary. There ordinarily the Spirit is poured out from on high. There sinners are enlightened, convicted, humbled, converted to God. There the child of God has his strength renewed. There he beholds the beauty of the Lord, and there "the King is held in the galleries." "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." *Psa. lxxxvii., 2.* If men love God they will follow him in this. There never was nor will be a pious man who could not sincerely adopt the words of the Psalmist: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." *Psa. cxxii., 1.*

3. Finally, these precious privileges will not last always. Indeed no man knows but that each successive Sabbath will be his last on earth. The people should be often solemnly reminded of this.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE MATTER OF PREACHING.

EVERY thing said in Scripture respecting preaching is suited to elevate our ideas of its importance. Not a word used by inspired men would lead us to regard it as of small moment.

In the New Testament are no less than five words sometimes rendered preach. One of these, found in Mark ii., 2, is commonly rendered speak, or talk, or tell. Another, found in Luke ix., 60, is elsewhere rendered declare, signify. Another, found in Acts iv., 2, is rendered show, speak, teach, declare. Another, found in Luke iii., 18, is rendered declare, preach the Gospel, bring good tidings, show glad tidings, declare glad tidings. The other word, commonly rendered preach, is sometimes rendered publish, proclaim: Matt. iii., 1; Luke viii., 39; xii., 3. Its cognate nouns are always rendered preacher and preaching. It occurs more than fifty times in the New Testament. It is found in each of the Gospels, in Acts, in ten of Paul's epistles, in the First Epistle of Peter, and in Revelation. It primarily and strictly means heralding. A messenger might be sent to one man or one family; but a herald was to make loud and indiscriminate proclamation of the business on which he was sent. The former might have a secret to tell to one or a few. The other was a public crier. His instructions were given him. To them he was confined. From them he might not vary.

Let us not forget that our Lord Jesus was himself a preacher. Indeed, his whole work on earth is sometimes

set forth summarily under the idea of preaching. So the evangelical prophet: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." That this relates to Christ we do infallibly know, for he says so. Luke iv., 16-22. Greatly did our Lord labor in this cause. Solemnly did he enjoin on his disciples to do as he had done. He has set his ministers as watchmen. They must give the alarm. He has given them the trumpet. Let them blow till the gladly solemn sound is heard every where. The object of the preaching of Christ's ministers is in the main the same as that of their Lord: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus." Acts xxvi., 18. The same is virtually declared by Paul. Eph. iv., 11-13. Clarke: "Your call is not to instruct men in the doctrines and duties of Christianity merely; but to convert them from sin to holiness."

We know of no time in the history of the world when a fitting ministry was more loudly called for than in this day. Wickedness is in high places. It must be followed to its fastnesses and its doom announced. It is also in low places, in the purlieus of perdition. It must there be summoned to surrender. It is very daring. It must be told without fear that God will visit. Again it is sneaking and cunning, walking in hidden paths and counsels. It must be made



to hear God's voice: "Judgment will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand," etc. Isa. xxviii., 17, 18. Compare Amos ix., 2-4; Obad. iii., 4. Bishop Sumner says: "The Church can not now engage in her service the blind, and the halt, and the lame. Her servants must be unblemished—'able ministers of the New Testament,' ready to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them—'apt to teach,' content to take patiently the spoiling of their goods for the truth's sake. This is no time for folding the hands in slumber, or for acquiescing in any low or cold standard of indifference." If abundance of good preaching was ever more needed than in our day, it is not easy to tell when or why it was so.

The chief subject of this chapter is the matter of preaching. What shall we preach, or tell, or speak, or herald, or proclaim? It may aid us to get at the truth to look at this subject both negatively and positively.

I. **NEGATIVELY.**—We should not preach heathen morality and pagan sentiments. If all our sermons have to do with the prophets and apostles is that in them we find a text or an illustration, while Socrates, Plato, Seneca, or Epictetus furnish the line of argument or the best thoughts, we are not obeying Christ. The best moral philosophy of ancients or moderns converts no one, sanctifies no one, saves no one; and of course neither exalts Christ nor glorifies God.

Nor are we to preach metaphysics. Bad metaphysics are errors, and error saves no one. The best metaphysics are but human science, and are no part of that word of truth by which salvation is effected. Of the late John Henry Livingston it is said by Dr. Samuel Miller (*Memoirs*,

p. 342): "This excellent man was a great enemy to metaphysical and philosophical preaching, and often remarked that if men ever became real Christians under such preaching, they walked in trammels, and never seemed to enjoy the riches and simplicity of the grace which is in Christ. He, therefore, seldom employed much of human argument in his discourses. They consisted, almost exclusively, of plain, simple Bible truth in Bible language. ✓ And he seemed, especially toward the close of life, to have a conviction, every day increasing in depth and weight, that this method of preaching the Gospel is the only one which promises to revive pure and undefiled religion, or to do much good to the souls of men. To adopt this conclusion, and to act upon it, has ever been, I believe, the final result of the most enlightened wisdom, and the richest experience of the best ministers the Christian Church has ever seen."

Whately, a model thinker, speaks of German metaphysics and theology as "a haze of words imperfectly understood, through which some remote ideas, scarcely distinguishable ✓ in their outline, loom, as it were, upon the view, in a kind of dusky grandeur, which vastly exaggerates their proportions." When some one said to such an author, "I do not understand your book," he exclaimed, "Understand it! it was not made to be understood. Did not you feel it?"

We may not preach politics. We have no command for so doing. We have no inspired example authorizing us to do so. If all men were right on such matters, they might still perish. All men might err in their views on these matters, yet, if they believed in Jesus, they would be saved. It seldom happens that a minister can give his views on such subjects without alienating some one from his ministry, impairing his usefulness, or giving needless offense. It is also a fact that in every land where preachers have turned poli-

ticians, they have commonly espoused the wrong side, and done more harm than good. We have something far better to preach than even sound theories of human government. Of Livingston, his biographer says (p. 152, 153): "He did not rove about as a political missionary, consuming his time in the discussion of questions relating to the public affairs, interesting as the subject then was to persons of every discription. Though a decided Whig; though he rejoiced at every occurrence auspicious to the cause of freedom, and both in public and in private remembered his beloved country at the throne of grace, praying that the right hand of the Almighty and the light of his countenance would save her, yet he loved the cause of Christ more; and he, therefore, assiduously employed himself in the glorious service to which he had been called. His prudence, his just sense of the dignity of his office, and of the solemn nature of its duties, were such as could hardly fail to preserve him from any unseemly remarks in ordinary discourse upon political matters." Oh, that his example had been followed by American clergymen of later times.

Nor are we to preach fine-spun theories of virtue and piety—theories, whether true or false, which are not in the Bible, are above the comprehension of the mass of men, and are not worth the time taken up in their discussion. Of every good minister it ought to be said, as of the Master himself, "The common people heard him gladly." This can not be done where time is wasted on refinements and questions which can not edify humble and godly people.

Nor may we preach or commend any human inventions in doctrines, order, or worship. Isa. xxix., 13; Matt. xv., 3, 6; Col. ii., 8.

Nor are we to preach a dry, heartless orthodoxy, however it may seem to be conformed to truth. The things to be



preached are the weightiest matters that ever claimed human attention. We may not fossilize the glorious doctrines of grace. The Word of God is quick and powerful, not dead and feeble. Practice is the life of piety. Truth is in order to godliness. When we perceive not the practical use of the doctrines of God's Word, we are apt to hold the truth in unrighteousness.

We need not preach much or formally the doctrines of natural religion. Ordinarily the best way is to take them for granted, as inspired writers commonly do. The reason is, they are generally believed, and that upon sufficient grounds. The exceptions to this suggestion are not many.

We are not to preach ourselves, to set forth our learning, our logical acumen, our finished scholarship, our cleverness, our oratory, our piety, our love for souls, our toils or sacrifices. "We preach not ourselves," says Paul. 2 Cor. iv., 5. Men may think ever so meanly of us personally, and yet they may be saved. But if men have a wrong estimate of Christ, they will lose their souls. "What think ye of Christ?" is the question on which salvation hinges. Luther: "I myself know nothing of Luther; will know nothing of him. I preach nothing of him, only Christ. The devil may take Luther (if he can). If he leave Christ in place, it will be well with us too." Those were good and solemn words of charge to a young preacher: "When you come into this place and address the people, you are not to bring your little self with you."

II. POSITIVELY.—The matter of our preaching must be the Word of God. Woe to him who willingly keeps back any part of the counsel of God. The man of God must unfold doctrines and enforce duties; must present promises and denounce threatenings; must hold forth encouragements without concealing responsibilities; must preach the law and the Gospel distinctly, and not a mixture of

both; yet he must not forget that mercy triumphs over judgment, and that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. As a physician of souls, he must know and declare the extent of the malady, no less than the perfection of the remedy. As men are poor, let him show them the riches of divine grace. As men are dead in trespasses and sins, let him point to him who is the life of the world. As they are naked, let him tell of the Lord our righteousness. As they are vile, let him show how Christ is made unto us sanctification. In short, let him preach the whole truth of Scripture. "Preach the preaching that I bid thee." "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; but he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jon. iii., 2; Jer. xxiii., 28, 29.

Great prominence ought to be given to the person, work, sufferings, offices, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says: "We preach Christ Jesus the Lord;" "I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." 2 Cor. iv., 5; 1 Cor. ii., 2. The divinity and humanity, the headship and the kingly authority, the doctrines and precepts, the sacrifice and intercession of Christ must neither be disused nor ignored, but maintained at all hazards. As the body without the soul is dead, so Christianity without a God-man is dead also. There is no more danger in making Christ prominent lest we discourage good works, than there is in performing many good works lest they lead to low esteem of the Saviour. Who among moderns abounded in good works more than the philanthropic Howard? Yet the inscription he ordered for his tomb was, "A sinner saved by grace." Doddridge has preserved a saying of Lady Huntington, which ought

to weigh much with us: "None know how to prize Christ ✓ but those who are zealous in good works. Men know not till they try what imperfect things their best works are, and how deficient we are in them; and the experience of that sweetness which attends their performance makes me more sensible of those obligations to him in whose grace is the principle of them in our hearts." Both in our experience and in our preaching, it is easy to make too little of Christ Jesus. But who ever made too much of him? Is he not the end of the law for righteousness? Is he not the light of the world? Is he not the way, the truth, and the life? Is he not the Alpha and the Omega, the author and the finisher of salvation? Without him we can do nothing. He is the substance of all saving doctrine, the sole sacrifice for sins, the King of Zion, the good shepherd, the bishop of souls. He is all and in all. By him we live, by him we have good hope, by him we are conquerors, by him we shall reign in glory.

In preaching we should also give great prominence to ✓ the person, grace, work, and power of God's Spirit. It is as true of the Holy Ghost as of the Father: "Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. ii., 30. The Holy Ghost is the author of all holiness in the human heart. He is girt with omnipotence. He can bend the most stubborn will. Only he can bend any will. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." There are no worse men ✓ than those who "are sensual, having not the Spirit." The Spirit of God is *good*. He is the author of all goodness. He is *free* and *sovereign*, dividing his gifts severally as he will. His operations are efficacious. Let preachers continually remind the people that it is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord, that any thing is to be effectually done for their salvation.



In preaching we must also give to faith and works their due place. He who does not believe that we are saved by grace through faith, and he who does not believe that faith without works is dead, do alike deny and oppose the truth of God. By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. That is clear. It is no less certain that all who savingly believe are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. While our good works no more justify our persons than do our evil works, yet nothing can ever justify our claim to sonship with God but a holy life. "In the order of performance godliness is as certainly before salvation, as if salvation did altogether depend upon it, and were in point of justice deserved by it."

One of the most amiable, dignified, and stable of New England divines of the old school was the late Dr. Hawes, of Hartford, Connecticut. His last days were made uneasy by alarm on account of the sad change taking place in portions of our country. At the ordination of Professor Dwight, in New Haven, September 15, 1861, he thus spoke of the new way of preaching: "Instead of coming right out in the strength of God, with the naked sword of the Spirit, to do battle with sin and error, it is too common for the preachers of our day to study to be ingenious, original, elegant; to make literary sermons, great sermons, popular sermons, as one says. To this end, instead of confining itself within its proper commission, that of delivering God's message in God's way, it ranges abroad over creation to find novel and strange subjects; and then it seeks to handle them in a new and original way; decking them out in tropes and figures, and all fine things; just suited to make the whole exhibition elegant and popular, it may be, but utterly ineffective and powerless as to all spiritual impression."

Having illustrated this statement, he proceeds thus:

“But not to dwell longer on lesser, though really important matters, let us come at once to what is believed by many to be a chief cause of the diminished power of the pulpit—it is DROPPING from its inculcations the *great distinguishing doctrines of grace*; not stating, explaining, proving, and applying them as themes for sermons, but substituting for them essays and speculations about matters and things in general; giving them a religious turn, but not aiming to break up the fallow ground of the hard, unregenerated heart by bringing to bear upon it the distinctive, searching, saving truths of the Gospel. Without admitting this to be true to the extent to which some carry it, it must be acknowledged that there is a tendency in this direction in the pulpit of the present day. The doctrines in question are not popular. The discussion of them is accounted dry and dull. The demand is for something more exciting, more entertaining and tasteful; and the modern pulpit is too much inclined to fall in with this demand; to discuss literary and ethical questions, questions of social and moral reform, or other matters of curious and novel character, instead of bringing forward and giving prominence to the old, and, as some would say, worn-out doctrines of depravity, regeneration, sovereignty, election, justification, together with the character and work of a crucified, atoning Christ, as the great central point of all Gospel truth. It is rather rare, I think, that the people hear a thorough-going, out-and-out discussion and application of these and other kindred doctrines from the pulpit.”

He afterward says: “It is even boasted by the enemies of evangelical religion, as one of the favorable signs of the times, that the stern orthodoxy of a former day has been obliged, under the pressure of public sentiment and the increase of light, to soften down or conceal some of its more severe and offensive points, and to be more pliant and ac-

commodating in its inculcations from the pulpit. This, I fear, is true to an extent which a due regard for the teachings of God's Word and the interests of religion would by no means justify. It is just what might be expected from the spirit of the times in which we live, that thorough, searching, humbling views of evangelical doctrine and duty should be unpopular. A luxurious, pleasure-loving, money-getting, skeptical age can have no liking for the plain, discriminating truths of God's Word. Its demand is rather for smooth things, for the prophesyings of deceits, and the holding forth of such views of God and his government, of the soul and its destiny, as are suited to soothe and flatter men in their worldliness and sins. I do not know whether the present is exactly the time which the apostle predicted should come, when men would not endure sound doctrine, but would heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and, turning from the truth, would be turned unto fables. But certain it is that there is much in the character of the present times which strongly resembles this. Teachers of all sorts are multiplied as they never were before, and they teach all sorts of things in the shape and name of religion, and great numbers are ready to run after them, carried about by every wind of doctrine, ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. In the mean time there is a growing demand to lower the standard of God's truth, to bring down the high and holy principles which constitute the vital power of the Gospel."

We must often remind our hearers of the world to come. If earth has its duties, eternity has its retributions. There are unending rewards and punishments, and they should be often and distinctly presented. Whitefield often said: "Would ministers preach for eternity, they would act the part of true Christian orators, for then they would endeav-



or to move the affections and warm the heart, and not constrain their hearers to suspect that they dealt in false commerce of unfelt truth." There is a heaven. There is a hell. Let the preacher duly speak of both. ✓

In short, let the minister of Christ preach all revealed truth in the proportion in which it is revealed in Scripture, and as the necessities of the people call for it. "Divinity is the haven and Sabbath of all man's contemplations." No subject is so sublime, so worthy of attention, so fit for the pulpit as is Scripture doctrine. It teaches us all that we must believe, practice, and experience in order to salvation. ✓ It is the word of life. It is the doctrine according to godliness.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE MANNER OF PREACHING.

THERE are a thousand ways of preaching a good sermon. It may be expository, textual, topical, hortatory, doctrinal, practical, alarming, consolatory, on a long passage or on a short text of Scripture, and yet it may be an excellent sermon. Some have held that we should never use short texts. But some of the best sermons have been preached on a very few words, as, "Jesus wept;" "God is love;" "The time is short;" "Have faith in God;" "Lord, increase our Faith;" "Quit you like men;" "Be of good courage." There is no more reason for proscribing short texts than long ones, if they are weighty and worthy of discussion. Yet choose them not merely because they are short. Some have condemned the use of all texts that were not plain and easily understood. The preacher, before he delivers his sermon, ought to know the meaning of his text, and be able to give the sense to his hearers; but if preachers never take texts not easily understood, they will omit some of the best texts in the Bible. In proof, see Mark ix., 49; Eph. vi, 24, and scores of such passages. We should never take a text, and then deny or oppose its teachings; though we may show that a text is true in one sense and not in another, as in Prov. xxvi., 4, 5. But it is shocking to piety for one to announce the text, "Be not conformed to this world," and then say, "My hearers, if you would do good, you must be conformed to this world." Nor can any subsequent explanation relieve such words

from the charge of irreverence. But let us come to particulars.

1. We must preach God's Word not only soberly, but solemnly. All good preaching is solemn, not gloomy, but piously grave; not filled with whining cant, but far from levity and vanity. He who speaks of God, eternity, sin, salvation, death, judgment, heaven, and hell in a frivolous manner is a contemptible trifler. With a buffoon for a preacher, no place is as the house of God or the gate of heaven. The Bible is not a jest-book; heaven is not a fiction; hell is not a dream; damnation is not a chimera. It is a solemn thing to die; it is a solemn thing to live. It is an awfully solemn thing to preach or hear the Gospel. He who "woos a smile" when he should "win a soul" is a charlatan, not an ambassador for God. Men are naturally triflers in sacred things. When the preacher is a harlequin and the pulpit a stage, the world applauds and perishes. But due reflection on the awful business of a true minister of Christ will put levity far away. Baxter used to say: "It must be serious preaching that will make men serious in hearing and obeying it." It would aid solemnity if preachers would remember how strict an account they must soon give for all they say and do. "The judge standeth before the door."

2. The solemnity here commended is not inconsistent with sprightliness and vivacity. Indeed, solemnity ought to beget liveliness. How is it possible for a preacher otherwise to secure attention? Shedd: "A purely intellectual farce may arrest and interest an audience, but taken by itself it can not persuade their wills or melt their hearts. The best sermons of a preacher are generally those composed under the impulse of a lively state of religious feeling." A preacher ought to feel that a great and pleasing work is before him, and he ought to engage in it "with an



elastic and bounding spirit." Dullness never adorns any spiritual work. The owl and the ass are both solemn, but they have no vivacity. They do not please us. We soon weary of looking at them. Spencer and Summerfield, Mason and Hall, were as sprightly as they were captivating. ✓ Let every thing within the preacher be stirred up.

2 13  
3. Let every thing said be well enunciated. Let it be spoken distinctly. Two famous preachers and professors of divinity were remarkable for their eloquence and power over their pupils. One of the best lecturers on medicine gained great *éclat* for eloquence. Yet each of these men had lost a part of his palate, and spoke with a nasal twang. But their power was not in their want of perfect vocal organs. They so trained and managed their speaking powers that, notwithstanding their natural defects, they made themselves distinctly heard. It is commonly perilous for a preacher to undertake to impress his thoughts on those who are considerably deaf. Such an effort commonly produces a slowness approaching a drawl, or it tears the voice to pieces. But let one speak so that all in the audience may hear every word, if their hearing is good. Blair: "Distinctness of articulation is far more conducive to being well heard and clearly understood than mere loudness of sound." All hurry must be avoided. Secure ✓ deliberateness at all cost. The larger the house, the greater must be our care to avoid undue rapidity.

4. Select as far as you can pure English words and idioms for conveying your thoughts to others. There is not a proverb in the English language that would not lose its power if stripped of its Anglo-Saxon. The best writings of our language would lose their charm if in each sentence one or two words were exchanged for others. The ✓ English Bible, Shakespeare, Defoe, and Bunyan show the power of words—of little words.

5. One of the errors producing poor preaching is the impression of some that it is an easy thing to speak well on sacred subjects. The old writers talk much of ministers *doing their work painfully*. We should take good heed. We should be willing to suffer, if need be, for the glory of Christ. Erasmus said: "To those who sincerely preach the Gospel of Christ a cross is never wanting." John Eliot said for the encouragement of all who feel aright: "Prayer and pains, through faith in Christ Jesus, can accomplish ✓ any purpose."

6. The Word of God must be preached plainly and simply, not in allusions and doubtful terms, not in innuendoes and learned phrases; not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth; not with the refinements of the schools, but so that the women, and children, and simple people may understand. Baxter said that if ministers had sinned in Latin, he would have written his Reformed Pastor in Latin; but as they had sinned in plain English, he must write in plain English also. Some of Romaine's people thought his style of preaching too plain and common, and requested him to display a little more learning in the pulpit. Accordingly, the next opportunity, he first read his text in Hebrew, saying, "I suppose scarcely any one in this congregation understands that." He then read it in Greek, and added, "There may be one or two that understand me now. I will next read it in Latin." He did so, and said, "Possibly a few more may comprehend me, but the number is still very limited." Last of all he repeated the text in English, and said, "There, now, you all understand it; which do you think is best? I hope always so to preach that the most ignorant person in the congregation may understand me." Orton says: "I believe many ministers over-polish their sermons. . . . The words of God are those that must reach the heart and do

the work." J. Brown, of Haddington, remarks: "So far as I have observed God's dealings with my soul, the flights of preachers have entertained me; but it was Scripture expressions that did penetrate my soul, and that in a manner peculiar to themselves." Thomas Watson says of the Baptist: "John did not preach so much to please as to profit. He chose rather to show men's sins than his own eloquence. That is the best looking-glass, not which is most gilded, but which shows the truest face." Luther: "To preach simply is high art. Christ does it himself. He speaks of husbandry, of sowing seed, and uses simple peasant's similes. Albrecht Dürer, the famous painter, used to say he 'had no pleasure in pictures that were painted with many colors, but in those that were painted with choice simplicity.' So is it with me as to sermons." The old English bishop was right when he said, "Brethren, it will take all our learning to make things plain." It is not true that "a clear idea is a little idea." Whately says: "Bacon is a striking instance of a genius who could think so profoundly, and at the same time so clearly, that an ordinary man understands readily most of his wisest sayings; and perhaps thinks them so self-evident as hardly to need mention. But, on reconsideration, you perceive more and more how many important applications one of his maxims will have, and how often it has been overlooked; and on returning to it again and again, fresh views of its importance will open on you. One of his sayings will be like one of the heavenly bodies that is visible to the naked eye, but in which you see more and more the better the telescope you apply to it. The 'dark sayings' of some other famous writers, on the other hand, may be compared to a fog-bank at sea, which the mariner, at first glance, takes for a chain of majestic mountains, but which, when he turns his glass upon it, proves nothing more than a shapeless heap of unwholesome vapors.



When such maxims accordingly are translated into ordinary language, they too often lose the appearance not only of wisdom but of sense. And the attempt to put them into any shape in which they can be intelligently applied to practice is like trying to make a comfortable dress out of some very old piece of brocade, that looks rich and sound in the chest, but when you bring it to the light, and shake out its folds in the air, the colors fly, and the fabric falls to tatters in a moment."

The great object of preaching is the manifestation of the truth so as rightly to impress it on every heart.

7. We must preach both didactically and controversially as the occasion demands. Probably, in a settled state of things, the rule is in favor of didactic discourses. Yet we may not decline a just defense of the truth, when we are called thereto. No small part of the ministry of our Lord and of his apostles was taken up in controverting wrong notions, and in establishing true doctrine. When Luther was asked which was the greater, to controvert adversaries or to exhort and hold up the weak, he said: "Both are good and needful, although to comfort the faint-hearted is something greater; and yet the weak themselves are edified and improved by hearing the faith contended for. Each is God's gift. . . . A preacher must be both a warrior and a shepherd." If one has no talent for vindicating beleaguered truth, let him not attempt it, but let him not despise its able and fearless advocates. It was one of the errors of the amiable John Newton that he did not and would not oppose any error. Consequently his people were unwarned against the craftiness of false teachers, and their venerable pastor was hardly buried till his flock was scattered, some of them falling among grievous wolves. Yet, as a general thing, "a quiet exposition of truth has a better effect than a violent attack upon error." But some

forget that we may attack error fairly, in good temper, without violence. Unholy passion is never helpful to God's cause. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Jas. i., 20. Thornton says: "Some think they can not be faithful unless they are furious; whatever mercy there may be in their message, there is none in their delivery." The present day calls for a defense of the truth. A German has said: "One period has fought for Christ's sepulchre, another for his body and blood; the present age is contending for his Word." And we must not yield an iota of saving truth. He who will not contend for the truth, when he might and should defend it, does not love it. Yet our greatest efforts should be for a growth in that which is practical and useful. An old divine says: "If we will be contending, let us contend like the olive and the vine, who shall produce the best and the most fruit; not like the aspen and the elm, which shall make the most noise in the wind."

8. The truth must be preached boldly. "When vice is bold, it is sad that virtue should be sneaking." When error, like Goliath, struts and vapors, and defies the armies of the living God, let not David be unarmed. A smooth stone from the brook will bring down the braggart. A tame or timid proclamation of God's laws and mercies is miserable driveling. Let us not fear what man can do unto us. "Paul could stand a whipping-post, but not a weeping farewell." We must not be chicken-hearted. When the Jews were filled with envy, and contradicted, and blasphemed, Paul and Barnabas waxed bold. Acts xiii., 46. Paul says: "Wherein any is bold, I am bold also." How much afraid he was of coming short in this respect may be learned from his beseeching the Ephesians to pray that utterance might be given him, "that he might open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel,

and that he might speak boldly, as he ought to speak." Eph. vi., 19, 20. Our message should be delivered in a fearless, not in an apologetic strain. We must learn to speak, not with brawling impudence, but with humble, intrepid confidence. A due sense of our awful accountability, of the value of men's souls, of the peril of living in unbelief, of the greatness of our message, and of the nearness of eternal things, will take away sinful cowardice from him who loves and trusts the Lord Jesus. Hall: "The moment we permit ourselves to think lightly of the Christian ministry, our right arm is withered; nothing but imbecility, and relaxation remain." Surely an ambassador for God ought to be valiant for the truth. I have known a good man who even upon oath gave his testimony so falteringly as was suited to clear the guilty and condemn the innocent. Ministers are witnesses for Christ. Let them speak out. Ryle: "Look at two witnesses giving their testimony from the witness-box—the one decided, and the other not—and mark the difference. The effect on the jury would be that the one would be believed, the other discredited. And may not those witnesses stand as types of the Christian ministry? What is the effect of a man standing up in the pulpit trembling, hesitating, and uncertain? Will that man be likely to carry conviction to the minds of his congregation? Will they be likely to believe what he says to be true? On the other hand, let a man stand up boldly and say, 'This is God's truth;' 'Thus saith the Lord;' and how different will be the effect!" Right-minded people do judge that from the pulpit and the witness-box the truth should come out without any disguise, corruption, or hesitancy, be the consequences what they may.

9. The Word of God should be spoken tenderly and affectionately. A harsh, dogmatical, censorious, or objura-



tory herald of truth is little like him who said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly." A sinner saved by grace should live under the power of the law of kindness. One says we might "almost as well not speak the truth at all as not speak it in love." It must be admitted that uttering lovely truth harshly or angrily is a terrible perversion. Perhaps it is John Newton who says it was very seemly that Bartimeus should tell all the blind of the love and power of Jesus; but it would have been very unseemly for him to have taken a club and beaten all who would not come to the Saviour. "Love, and say what you please," is a saying at least fifteen hundred years old. Luther: "Teach the Gospel simply, without any snapping or biting. Every one should be content with his own gifts which God has given him. We need in any building more common stones than corner-stones." Venn said to his son: "Look upon your people as prisoners under condemnation, for whose pardon and recovery you ought to feel as the tender mother does for the child at her breast. Lament an unfeeling heart in yourself as well as in them; beg earnestly that you may long after their salvation in the bowels of the Lord Jesus Christ." It is not easy to do so. By nature we are cold, selfish, little inclined to be moved or distressed by the spiritual miseries or dangers of men. Nor will any sudden pang of feeling or paroxysm of sympathy answer the purpose. We must be brought by the Holy Spirit, and by long study and reflection, to pity poor sinners and afflicted saints. If we are not imbued with heavenly things, we can not have that tenderness which will save us from harshness and severity. Of two classes of truths we may find it easy to err in this direction. 1. When we attempt to convince men of sin, we should be very careful not to do it in tones or terms indicative of want of tenderness. Some of the warm and worthy preachers of the

last, as well as of the present century, indulged in such language as can in no case be justified. 2. When we speak of the terrors of the Lord, and warn men of the dreadful doom awaiting them, we should do it in such a meek and tender manner as to convince them that we compassionate their miserable condition as they stand exposed to a fierce and fiery condemnation, the more terrible because it is just—wholly just. On this subject there ought to be no difference. Dwight especially warns preachers against an improper way of speaking of the anger of God against sin, and his denunciations against sinners; particularly the final judgment and retribution, and the future sufferings of the impenitent. “It is no unfrequent thing to hear these subjects discussed in that strong language and that vehement utterance, with which an impassioned speaker labors to express his own indignation, and to rouse that of his audience against atrocious crimes or invading enemies. Vehemence is not the manner of address which is suited to subjects of this nature. The preacher ought to remember that in disclosing the doom of the impenitent, he is, perhaps, pronouncing his own. How few even of the best men are *assured* of their own safety. Were this objection removed, how unfitted (to say the least) is it to subjects so awful!” If we can speak of the dreadful doom of the wicked in a harsh manner, we ought to be alarmed. We ought to make Christ our pattern. Isa. lxi., 1–3; Luke iv., 20–22; Matt. xi., 28–30. The tender affection we should manifest relates first to Christ. We should seek the things that are Christ’s. His love should constrain us. Then we should be very tender toward our fellow-men. Our love should be not only to the saints as the excellent of the earth; but our pity should go forth to the most wicked of our race. Their case is dreadful. If they die in their sins, they will be for-

ever undone. In that case it would be good for them if they had never been born.

✓ 10. Boldness and love are essential elements of earnestness. We should preach the Gospel as if we really believed all its glorious and all its awful truths. The facts are these: heaven is open just before us; hell is yawning just beneath us; the avenger of blood is just behind us; the axe is laid at the root of the tree; God himself urgently invites us; mercy opens all her rich store-houses; the Judge standeth before the door; the battle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness is raging; heaven, earth, and hell are moved on the subject of man's eternal destiny. And shall we, can we, faintly tell of the great ruin that has come on man, or of the great salvation provided by God? What a shame that upon history, politics, patriotism, or a Greek verb men should be all alive; and yet upon the fall and upon redemption there should be a lifeless languor. Luther said a preacher ought to be ready to stake body and life, goods and glory, on the truth of his message. Such a man will not be tame or cold. Cecil: "The world will allow a vehemence approaching ↓ ecstasy on almost every subject but religion, which, above all others, will justify it." And yet without such vehemence the world despises the professed herald of salvation, who languidly or drawlingly delivers his message from God. They naturally suspect his sincerity. They justly suspect his fitness for his office. But this subject must come up again in another connection, and be further considered.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### MANNER OF PREACHING—CONTINUED.

11. WE must preach to the consciences of men, not to ✓  
their fancies or tastes. Our appeal should be direct. There  
is a moral sense, which may seem to be appealed to in  
vain, but perhaps it never is. Some effect, which shall  
glorify God, is commonly produced. Peter's sermon on  
the day of Pentécost was a model in this respect. How it  
bore down on the conscience of every man. Such preach-  
ing was not uncommon in primitive times. By the di-  
vine blessing it had an effect which could not be conceal-  
ed. Paul says: "If all prophesy, and there come in one  
that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all,  
he is judged of all: and thus are the secrets of his heart  
made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will  
worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." 1  
Cor. xiv., 24, 25. This is the kind of preaching needed in ✓  
all ages of the Church—preaching that will convince and  
move men to act from the force of truth. Men can not ex-  
tinguish their consciences by even false principles. Herod  
was a Sadducee. He believed neither in angel, nor spirit,  
nor resurrection. This guilty man made himself more vile  
by beheading the faithful John Baptist. Soon after Jesus  
began to be much spoken of. Many were the conjectures  
respecting him. Some said that he was Elias; some that  
he was one of the old prophets; but Herod said that  
"John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore  
mighty works do show forth themselves in him." Mark  
vi., 14-16. His Sadducean principles fled before the pow-

er of conscience, as thieves from an armed force coming with torches to arrest wrong-doers. A late member of the British Parliament was so stung by his conscience for swearing by a God in whose existence he professed want of belief, that he besought his countrymen to give him some relief. A solemn and direct appeal to men's consciences always has some effect.

12. What shall we say of sensational preaching? It is easy to speak as one of the foolish women on such a subject. The word sensational is not found in some of our best dictionaries. But they all give the word sensation. This has both a good and a bad meaning. Sometimes it means that excited interest, that strongly engaged attention, which men sometimes experience. In this sense all effective speaking is sensational. In this sense our Lord's ministry was sensational. It produced powerful effects even on stubborn opposers. "Never man spake like this man." "They were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power." "The people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." "And they were all amazed, inso-much that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this?" "What a word is this!" Such sensation was often produced by the preaching of the apostles, by the preaching of Massillon, of Livingston, of John Elias, of Christmas Evans, of Berridge, of Whitefield, and of Edwards.

But by sensational preaching, in the popular use of that term, is commonly meant a studied effort at a theatrical effect. It produces an effect on our lower nature. Its appeals are not to conscience, so much as to the nervous sensibilities. It has pretty flashes, but it has only sheet-lightning, which hurts no one, moves no one. Its whole power is theatrical. Its effect soon passes away. Saints and sin-

ners are affected alike by it. It often gives thrusts at serious, edifying preaching. If the people are interested and pleased, the preacher has gained his point. He aims not to profit, but to fascinate them. If they think he is a charming preacher, he thinks they are charming hearers. Such preaching ought not to be encouraged. It is not to the glory of God or the salvation of souls.

13. We must preach the Gospel diligently, in season and out of season, publicly and from house to house, by day and by night. Chrysostom preached so much that Erasmus says, "I know not whether more to admire the indefatigableness of the man or of his hearers." Whitefield died at the age of fifty-six years, yet he set the world on fire by his eighteen thousand sermons, before he breathed out his great and gallant soul into the hands of his Maker. Generally we should preach better, if we preached more. In a letter to Farel, Calvin discloses something of his life of toil: "When the messenger called for my book (his Commentary on Romans), I had twenty sheets to revise—to preach—to read to the congregation—to write forty-two letters—to attend to some controversies, and to return answers to more than ten persons, who, seeking advice, interrupted me in the midst of my labors." He preached or lectured nine times a week, as some affirm. Augustine was right: "Episcopatus non est artificium transigendæ vitæ." The office of a bishop is not a device for spending an easy life. Quesnel: "The sacred ministry is not a state of idleness or of delight; but a holy warfare, in which there are always toils and fatigues to be endured." Whoever is not resolved courageously to maintain the interests of Jesus Christ, and to labor continually to enlarge his kingdom, is not fit for the warfare. A true minister must be at his work late and early. Alas! for most of us, "life is half spent before we know what it is." Yet the diligence call-



ed for is neither drudgery nor a pragmatistical officiousness. Nor is there any thing in the required diligence inconsistent with requisite rest and recreation. Our blessed Lord once said to his disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." Mark vi., 31. The bow must be sometimes unbent, or it will lose its elasticity. The Lord is not a hard Master. And yet a lazy ministry is a curse to any people, and is accursed of God. Hear his awful words: "All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they can not bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that can not understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine; and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Isa. lvi., 9-12. Here we see God's anger against laziness, and its kindred vices ignorance, covetousness, and luxuriousness. Luther urges that a preacher should be sure what he means to say, and so should study diligently. "No unfit emblem for the ministry is to be found on the seal of one of our religious societies—the *ox standing between the altar and the plow*—with the inscription, 'In utrumque paratus'—ready for either, service or sacrifice, the yoke or the knife."

14. These thoughts suggest the subject of the length of sermons. This is a matter of interest. There is no little diversity of opinion and practice on this subject. The Word of God fixes no length to our discourses. The first extended account we have of formal preaching is in the Book of Nehemiah. It lasted for several days. The preachers were on a pulpit, and when one was tired another took his place. The congregation, which was made

up of men and women, stood, thus forming a compact body of listeners. The preaching lasted from the morning until midday. Neh. viii., 1-8. At least once Paul "was long preaching," and "continued his speech until midnight." Acts xx., 7, 9. The Covenanters, in the glens and mountains of Scotland, in times of persecution often continued together all day, as a measure of safety, and did well to have some religious service going on most of the time. But all these were extraordinary occasions, calling for unusual services. In an ordinary and settled state of the Church, such protracted services are out of place. Still there is diversity in practice. Luther: "A preacher should know when to stop." Doddridge: "Know when to have done." Witherspoon: "Quit when you are done." Jay recommends that a sermon should not exceed forty-five minutes. Dr. Samuel Miller advised the same thing. Whitefield seldom preached longer than forty-five minutes. It can not be denied that much depends on the temper of the audience, and that is much affected by the spirit of the preacher. Many a good sermon has been preached in fifteen or twenty minutes. Others have ranged from one hour to two and a half hours. If the people see that a preacher is full of matter, greatly impressed with his subject, and making no needless digressions, they will not be apt to wish him to cut short his discourse. A preacher who drawls and multiplies words is tiresome, if he speaks but twenty minutes. He who wears out all the strength of the people, and he who sacrifices his subject to a time-piece, are alike unwise. Lamont: "Nothing can justify a long sermon. If it be a good one, it *need not* be long; and if it be a bad one, it *ought not* to be long." In this as in many other things God has left us a large liberty. He is a wise man who knows how to use that liberty discreetly. In his lectures on preaching, Mr. Beecher says:

“One word as to the length of sermons. That should never be determined by the clock, but upon broader considerations; short sermons for small subjects, and long sermons for large subjects. It does not require that sermons should be of any uniform length. Let one be short, and the next long, and the next intermediate. It is true that it is bad policy to fatigue men, but shortness is not the only remedy for that. The true way to shorten a sermon is to make it more interesting. The object of preaching is not to let men out of church at a given time. The length or quality of a sermon must be determined by the objects which it has in view. Now you can not discuss great themes in a short compass, nor can you by dribblets—by sermons of ten or twenty minutes—train an audience to a broad consideration of high themes. There is a medium. A minister ought to be able to hold an audience for an hour in the discussion of great themes; and the habit of ample time and ample discussion, even if occasionally it carries with it the incidental evil of weariness, will in the long run produce a nobler class of minds and a higher type of education than can possibly belong to the school of dwarfed sermonizers.”

15. We must preach faithfully. We are not sent to prophesy smooth things, nor to sew pillows for all arm-holes. The native depravity of man and the cunning of Satan are always at work to lull men's souls into security. Our work is not to justify men to God, nor to take sides with rebels against their Maker. We must take sides with God against all his enemies. In this matter there is left us no discretion. In no case may we yield to the wicked prejudices, errors, and clamors of men. We can not maintain God's cause by stealth. To stand faithful among the faithless, to make open and fearless war on unrighteousness, to vindicate the right and the true in Christian faith



and morals, is the covenanted work of every messenger of the Lord of hosts. It was a great thing for Paul to be able to say, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you." Acts xx., 20. "We are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." 2 Cor. ii., 17. "Seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." 2 Cor. iv., 1, 2. A minister of Christ may not give erroneous interpretations to God's Word. He should ever employ sound speech that can not be condemned. In this age there is great need of uncorruptness in doctrine. Every thing is cast into the crucible of a false philosophy. The proper antagonist and antidote of error is truth—of religious error, the truth of God. He who would rightly use that Word must read it, study it, pray over it, and speak it without showing any favor to the great, the mighty, or the popular of his day. He may not trim his sails to catch the breath of public favor. He must tell the whole story, and give full and timely warning. Read Ezekiel iii., 17–21.

16. We must preach experimentally. How else shall we reach many cases among our hearers? Jay: "What I have always deemed the best kind of preaching is neither highly doctrinal nor dryly practical; but distinguished by what I should call *experimentality*, or a constant blending of the doctrines and practice of the Gospel strongly with the affections and feelings. Many of our Northern divines have been sadly deficient here. Their sermons have had theology enough in them, and were well methodized; but there was little in them to rend and melt." A religious

character without experience is very frail. And a religious character formed without experimental preaching is almost sure to be feeble and sadly out of proportion.

17. We must preach with discrimination, "rightly dividing the Word of truth." We must give the household of faith "their meat in due season." 2 Tim. ii., 15; Matt. xxiv., 45; Luke xii., 42. Mere generalities in preaching affect no one. While the success of any ministry greatly depends on a nice and wise discrimination, there is hardly any good quality more lacking. He who preaches neither the law in its extent and spirituality, nor the Gospel in its fullness and freeness, but a sort of legalized gospel or evangelical law; who treats penitent believers and alarmed hypocrites alike; who sees no difference between loving God for his own infinite excellence, and loving him in the hope of being a gainer thereby, will preach very differently from the man who makes just distinctions. It is sad indeed when through bungling awkwardness we afflict those whom God comforts, and comfort those who fight against him, even though they do it secretly. There is a difference between saints and sinners. Let the line there drawn be vigorous.

17. Ministers should preach with authority. That does not mean an assumptive tone or an arrogant manner. But it does mean that ministers come with a solemn and awful commission from heaven, and that so long as they confine themselves to their message and the right way of delivering it, their words have the sanction of God and of eternity. It is a sad thing to hear a minister of Christ excusing himself, and almost retracting what he has said, lest he may have hurt some one's feelings. To a young minister Paul said: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." Tit. ii., 15. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." 1 Peter iv., 11. And Jesus himself says: "He that hear-

eth you, heareth me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.” Luke x., 17. Compare Matt. xviii., 18. Aware of the awful responsibility of himself and his hearers, the servant of Christ will bear himself with a dignity far removed from both levity and austerity.

19. We must preach variously and seasonably. Snow is as much from heaven as rain, and may answer as good a purpose. Isa. lv., 9, 10. But we do not want snow in mid-summer, or rain in harvest. We must teach, warn, reprove, rebuke, persuade, convince, comfort. We may explain a parable, expound a psalm, enforce a duty, point out a privilege, rehearse a history, lead men by kind entreaty, or alarm them by awful threatenings, and yet be doing our whole duty at the time. “A wise man regardeth both time and judgment.”

20. All preaching must be enforced by good example. Though a man may do some good, yet he is not likely to be very useful by proclaiming truths which sanctify not his own soul. With good reason, therefore, did Paul say to a young minister : “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” 1 Tim. iv., 12. What can a preacher do without faith—faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in his own message? And how can he successfully commend even truths which are contradicted by his daily behavior? That which has given great power to many, from the days of the apostles down to this time, was that they could truly say : “We believe, and therefore speak.” Words teach, but example draws—has grown into a saying in several languages. The worst error in religion is a wicked life.

21. Ministers should preach better and better. Till their faculties begin to fail through age or disease, there should be a manifest improvement in their gifts as well as in their



graces. So Paul teaches: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." 1 Tim. iv., 15. It is a sad thing when a man preaches no better at forty-five than he did at twenty-five, especially where there was ample room for improvement. John Wesley once wrote to a minister: "Your talent in preaching does not increase; it is about the same as it was seven years ago; it is lively, but not deep; there is little variety—there is no compass of thought. Reading alone can supply this, with daily meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this. You can never be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian. Oh, begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not. What is tedious at first will afterward be pleasant. Whether you like it or not, read and pray daily. It is for your life; there is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a petty, superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow; do not starve yourself any longer." When Paul was an old man he still wanted his books and parchments. 2 Tim. iv., 13.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### EARNEST PREACHING.

SOMETHING has already been said on this subject; but the importance of the matter demands further consideration. To speak to men of eternal things as if they were trifles is so monstrous that none will argue for it.

All proper earnestness must be based in a deep religious experience. Leighton: "It is a cold, lifeless thing to speak of spiritual things upon mere report; but they that speak of them as their own, as having share and interest in them, and some experience of their sweetness, their discourse of them is enlivened by firm belief and an ardent affection; they can not mention them but their hearts are straight taken with such gladness as they are forced to vent in praises." Some have greatly erred by relying on their natural temperament, on their youthfulness, or on the excitement produced by the presence of an audience; but these are wholly insufficient to the ends of fervent preaching. Without undervaluing any natural gifts or advantages, we may yet safely affirm that youth must give place to age, and that natural vivacity is not the deep-toned thing demanded by the awfully solemn messages Christ's ministers have to deliver to the perishing.

And without this fervor there will soon be painfully manifest a time-serving spirit, and an unmanly desire to please one's hearers. The public taste will then be far more consulted than the public good. Popular vices will be handled with gentleness, and spiritual wickedness will reign undisturbed. "It is a mighty shame and dishonor

to employ excellent faculties and abundance of humor to please men in their vices and follies." All such use of our powers is a base prostitution.

Of all the men who have been greatly useful as heralds of salvation, not one was marked by coldness or tameness. On the contrary, fire from heaven came down and kindled their affections into a glow. As nothing is more useful in such a matter than striking examples, it may be well here to refer to a few such as are known to have abounded in labors and in success.

One of the best preachers that Scotland ever produced was John Livingston, the ancestor of the family of Livingston in the United States. Since the days of the apostles, perhaps no man has ever preached with more power or more success, at least on some occasions. He says: "Earnest faith and prayer, a single aime at the glory of God and good of people, a sanctified heart and carriage, shall avaiill much for right preaching." There is sometimes somewhat in preaching that can not be ascribed either to the matter or expression, and can not be described what it is, or from whence it cometh, but with a sweet violence it pierceeth into the heart and affections, and comes immediately from the Lord. But if there be any way to attaine to such a thing, it is by a heavenly disposition of the speaker." Again he says: "I never preached ane sermon which I would be earnest to see in wryte but two: the one was on ane Munday after *the communion at Shotts*, and the other on ane Munday after the communion at Hollywood; and both these times I had spent the whole night before in conference and prayer with some Christians, without any more than ordinary preparation; otherwayes, my gift was rather suited to simple, common people, than to learned and judicious auditors."

In his life of Baxter, Jenkyn says: "In preaching, Bax-



ter's heart burned within him; and while he was speaking, a live coal from the altar fired his sermons with seraphic fervor. Into his pulpit he brought all the energies of his entire nature. He had a large mind, an acute intellect, a melting heart, a kindling eye, and a 'moving voice,' and he called on all that was within him to aid him in his preaching. Being deeply earnest himself, he wished his hearers to be deeply earnest. Himself being a burning light, he wished to flash the hallowed fire into the hearts of others. He seems never to have studied action, nor 'the start theatric.' The only teacher that gave him lessons in action and attitude was feeling—real, genuine, holy feeling; and this taught him how to look, how to move, and how to speak. In preaching, as well as in every thing religious, he believed with Paul that 'it is a good thing to be zealously affected always;' and, consequently, that earnest, fervid preaching is truly apostolic."

Two lines of Baxter's disclose his purpose:

"I'll preach as though I ne'er should preach again,  
And as a dying man to dying men."

Dr. Bates says of him: "He had a marvelous felicity and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style. His great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words. He despised flash oratory. But his expressions were so clear and powerful, so convincing to the understanding, so entering into the soul, so engaging the affections, that those were as deaf as an adder who were not charmed by so wise a charmer."

Ryle says: Baxter had "an earnestness of manner that swept every thing before it like a torrent. . . . He always spoke like one who saw God, and felt death at his back."

Melvill Horne, speaking of Fletcher of Madeley, says: "On my occasional visits I was struck with several things.

Preaching on Noah as a type of Christ, he was in the midst of a most animated description of the terrible day of the Lord, when he suddenly paused. Every feature of his expressive countenance was marked with painful feeling; and striking his forehead with the palm of his hand, he exclaimed, 'Wretched man that I am! Beloved brethren, it often cuts me to the soul, as it does at this moment, to reflect that, while I have been endeavoring by the force of truth, by the beauties of holiness, and even by the terrors of the Lord, to bring you to walk in the peaceful paths of righteousness, I am, with respect to many of you who reject the Gospel, only tying millstones about your neck, to sink you deeper into perdition.' The whole church was electrified, and it was some time before he could resume the subject.

"On another occasion, after the morning service, he asked if any of the congregation could give him the address of a sick man whom he was desired to visit. He was answered, 'He is dead, sir.' 'Dead! dead!' he exclaimed; 'another soul launched into eternity! What can I do for him now? Why, my friends, will you so frequently serve me in this manner? I am not informed that you are ill till I find you dying, or hear that you are dead!'

"Then, sitting down, he covered his head with his gown; and when the congregation had retired, he walked home buried in sorrow, as though he had lost a friend or brother."

Few men have afforded a brighter example of fervor in proclaiming the Gospel than George Whitefield. Although he died at the age of fifty-six, yet he had preached more than *eighteen thousand* times. With what ardor he did this, his many tears and his whole manner abundantly declared. He was indeed a burning and a shining light. He lived to win souls to Christ. He subordinated every thing to this great purpose. He lived, he prayed, he read, he

wept, he rejoiced to accomplish this one great end, the saving of men's souls. He turned every thing to account in preaching. When he first visited Edinburgh, he went to witness a public execution. The next day he preached on Christ's crucifixion, and said: "I know that many of you will find it difficult to reconcile my appearance yesterday with my character. I went as an *observer of human nature*, and to see the effect such an example would have on those who witnessed it. *I watched the conduct of almost every person present on that awful occasion*; and I was highly pleased with their demeanor, which has given me a very favorable opinion of the Scottish nation. Your sympathy was visible in your countenances, particularly when the moment arrived when your unhappy fellow-creature was to close his eyes on this world forever. Then *you all, as if moved by one impulse, turned your heads aside and wept!* And those tears were precious, and will be had in remembrance. *How different was it when the Saviour of mankind was extended on the cross!* The Jews, instead of sympathizing in his sorrows, triumphed in them. They reviled him with words even more bitter than the gall and vinegar they gave him to drink. *Not one* of all that witnessed his pains turned aside his head, even in the last pang! Yes, my friends, there *was one*; that glorious Luminary *veiled his brightness*, and traveled in his course in ten-fold night." Such words from Whitefield must have overwhelmed many a mind, not so much by their eloquence as by the display of the fervor of the preacher, who was laying all nature, all history, and all passing events under contribution to aid him in his high calling. ✓

In 1852 there was a Scottish missionary in South Africa, whose name was Morgan. A Baptist missionary thus wrote concerning him: "He preaches uniformly four times on the Sabbath, twice in English and twice in Dutch; trains



his own choir, and conducts his own singing and his own Sabbath-school, and has charge of a numerous mission and charity school, in which he spends much of his time during the week days. He is also either chairman or secretary of nearly all the benevolent societies in the town, and generally gets up their reports." Now, although it is possible for a man, through a pragmatistical turn of mind, to be officious in many things, and even for a time to make quite a show of zeal, without any depth of religious feeling, yet it is not probable that a man would long continue such a course as that pursued by Mr. Morgan unless he had fervent love to Christ. To abound in such labors is no mean sign that one abounds in faith and love.

But we have other examples, and safer than those cited. Paul says to the elders of the Church at Ephesus: "By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Acts xx., 31. And we know how zealously he traversed the earth in search of God's elect, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. In all this he was but following the example of other holy men, and especially of him who was without spot, and separate from sinners.

How matchless was the zeal of the blessed Saviour. No discouragements could repress his ardor, no ingratitude quench his love for souls, no weariness make him neglect the work the Father gave him to do. On the mount, in the ship, by the sea-side, by Jacob's well, in the field and in the temple, his heart still glowed with zeal for God's glory; and his "hands dropped with myrrh, and his fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock." The zeal of God's house consumed him. He hath in all things set us an example that we should follow his steps.

All these examples are safe and good. Nor are the teachings of pious men less clear than their examples. Richard Baxter says: "How few ministers do preach with all their might! or speak about everlasting joy or torment in such a manner as to make men believe that they were in good earnest. It would make a man's heart ache to see a company of dead and drowsy sinners sit under a minister, and not have a word that is like to quicken or awaken them. To think with ourselves, *O if these sinners were convinced and awakened, they might yet be converted and live.* And, alas! we speak so drowsily or gently that sleepy sinners can not hear. The blow falls so light that hard-hearted persons can not feel it. Most ministers will not so much as put out their voice, and stir up themselves to an earnest utterance. But if they do speak out loud and earnestly, how few do answer it with earnestness of matter! And then the voice doth but little good, the people will take it for a mere bawling, when the matter doth not correspond.

"It would grieve one to hear what excellent doctrine some ministers have in hand, and let it die in their hand for want of close and lively application. What fit matter they have for convincing sinners, and how little do they make of it; and what a deal of good it might do if it were sent home; and yet they can not or will not do it. O sirs! how plain, how close should we deliver a message of such a nature as ours! When the everlasting life or death of men is concerned in it, methinks we are nowhere so wanting as in this seriousness. There is nothing more unsuitable to such a business than to be slight and dull. What! speak coldly of God! and for men's salvation! Can we believe that our people must be converted or condemned, and yet we speak in a drowsy tone! In the name of God, brethren, labor to awaken your hearts before you come;

and when you are in the work, that you may be fit to awaken the hearts of sinners. Remember that they must either be awakened or damned; and a sleepy preacher will hardly awaken them."

The elder President Edwards bears a concurrent testimony. He says: "Two things exceeding needful in ministers, as they would do any great matters to advance the kingdom of Christ, are *zeal* and *resolution*. Their influence and power, to bring to pass great effects, is greater than can be well imagined. A man of but an ordinary capacity will do more with them than one of ten times the parts and learning without them. . . . While we are cold and heartless, and only go on in a dull manner, in an old formal round, we shall never do any great matters." Again: "I think an exceeding affectionate way of preaching about the great things of religion has in itself no tendency to beget false apprehensions of them; but on the contrary, a much greater tendency to beget true apprehensions of them, than a moderate, dull, indifferent way of speaking of them. . . . If the subject be in its own nature worthy of very great affection, then speaking of it with very great affection is most agreeable to the nature of that subject, or is the truest representation of it, and therefore has most of a tendency to beget true ideas of it in the minds of those to whom the representation is made. . . . I know it has long been fashionable to despise a very earnest and pathetic way of preaching. . . . Our people do not so much need to have their heads stored as to have their hearts touched; and they stand in the greatest need of that sort of preaching which has the greatest tendency to do this."

Dr. Adam Clarke says: "While you are engaged in the pulpit in recommending the salvation of God, endeavor to feel the truth you preach, and diffuse a divine animation



through every part. As the preacher appears to the people, the people hear and believe. You may set it down as an incontrovertible truth that none of your hearers will be more affected with your discourse than yourself. A dull, dead preacher makes a dull, dead congregation."

Dr. Coke, speaking of "the different sources whence arises the defect of zeal in ministers of the Gospel," says: "We can not too often set them before our eyes, for they are the poisoned fountains whence flow all the evils of the Church of Christ. . . . Frozen discourses will never set on fire ✓ the souls of the hearers. Indeed, how can these ministers even *appear* to the people as animated with that divine fire which carries the sparks of grace to the coldest and most insensible hearts, who themselves are all ice in the practice of every duty; and who feel not themselves all alive for the salvation of either their brethren or themselves? If we fill up our public duties with an air of custom, of weariness, of reluctance (which is inseparable from a life of lukewarmness), and of unfaithfulness in the pas- ✓ toral office, we shall leave the same dispositions in those who hear us."

In his *Student and Pastor*, Mason says: "Endeavor to affect your own mind with what you deliver, and then you will not fail to affect the minds of your hearers."

Bishop Burnet says: "Artificial eloquence without a flame within is like artificial poetry; all its productions are forced and unnatural, and in a great measure ridiculous."

Bishop Wilkins says: "'Tis said of John Baptist that he was a burning and shining light. *Ardere prius est, lucere posterius; ardor mentis est lux doctrine!* 'Tis a hard matter to affect others with what we are not first af- fected ourselves."

That great master of human nature and of eloquence,

Quintilian, says: "*Summa quantum ego quidem sentio, circa movendos affectus, in hoc posita est, ut moveamur.*"

Chrysostom says: "A bishop had need be sober and vigilant, and have all his eyes about him, who lives not only for himself, but for so great a multitude of people. . . . Nothing is more opposed to the spirit of the ministry to which the Church of Christ has joined us than a quiet and retired life, which many erroneously regard as the kind of life the most sublime and perfect."

The Rev. Charles Jerram says: "May we ever bear in mind that the Gospel is a message from the God of love: that its blessings were purchased by the love of Christ, and that its benefits are imparted by the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and we shall see at once that the ambassadors of this compassionate, triune God never act in character, but when the law of love is in their hearts, and the language of it upon their lips. Oh, that we could each appeal to our several flocks as the Apostle did to the Thessalonians, and say: 'We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.'"

Dr. Wardlaw says: "In a true imitator of Jesus and of Paul there will be no frigid apathy, no listless indifference; but whether the immediate aim of his preaching be the conversion of sinners or the establishment of saints, he will speak from the fullness of a heart melting with compassion and glowing with love; declaring momentous truth in the language of fervent feeling; uttering 'thoughts that breathe' in 'words that burn.'"

What is thus taught by the examples and solemnly expressed judgments of many is repeatedly inculcated in Holy Writ. Indeed, how can the following Scriptures be

expounded in any fair way, that does not teach that the Gospel is rightly preached and divine truth rightly proclaimed in an earnest manner—in a manner amounting to what most men would call vehemence? “Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?” Prov. viii., 1. “She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.” Prov. viii., 3, 4. “Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets.” Prov. i., 20. “She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the high places of the city.” Prov. ix., 3. “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her iniquity is pardoned.” Isa. xl., 2. “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sin.” Isa. lviii., 1. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God.” Isa. lxi., 1, 2. “Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord,” etc. Jer. ii., 2. “Thus saith the Lord God, Smite with thine hand, and stamp with thy foot, and say, Alas for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel.” Ezek. vi., 11. “The Lord of hosts shall defend them, and they shall devour and subdue with slingstones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine.” Zech. ix., 15. “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.” John vii., 37.

Now it would be greatly perverting these passages of God's Word to attempt by them to countenance mere bluster, boisterousness, and vociferation. An attempt to ex-



hibit an earnest manner when there is not an earnest heart is as disgusting and futile as any thing can well be. At the same time they are utterly opposed to tameness and coldness of manner in proclaiming the Gospel. They even require more than briskness and vivacity. They call for holy ardor, for rousing earnestness. It is easy to make any thing ridiculous by a little perversion; but it is impossible to understand these Scriptures as teaching less than that deep pathos is appropriate to the delivery of the awful truths of religion.

It would be very unwise to hold up the late Rev. Sidney Smith as a safe guide in life or doctrine; yet that learned and ingenious man saw the monstrous absurdity of a cold delivery of Gospel truth. He says: "Why are we natural every where but in the pulpit? No man expresses warm and animated feelings any where else, with his mouth alone, but with his whole body; he articulates with every limb, and talks from head to foot with a thousand voices. Why this holoplexia on sacred occasions alone? Why call in the aid of paralysis to piety? Is it a rule of oratory to balance the style against the subject, and to handle the most sublime truths in the dullest language and driest manner? Is sin to be taken from men, as Eve was taken from Adam, by casting them into a deep slumber? Or from what possible perversion of common-sense are we all to look like field-preachers in Zembla, holy lumps of ice numbed into quiescence, and stagnation, and mumbling? There is, I grant, something discouraging at present to a man of sense in the sarcastical phrase of 'popular preacher;' but I am not entirely without hope that the time may come when energy in the pulpit may be no longer considered as a mark of superficial understanding; when animation and affectation will be separated; when churches will cease (as Swift says) to be public dormitories; and

sleep be no longer looked upon as the most convenient vehicle of good sense."

It then becomes a matter of importance that we should know how we may secure and maintain proper ardor of feeling as preachers of righteousness. The following suggestions may be of use.

1. All true, proper ardor has its seat in a renewed heart, and in a blessed experience of the precious truths of religion.

2. A very high estimate should be placed on this ardor, and we should earnestly covet it as one of the best gifts. It is the fire from heaven that should kindle every sacrifice, that should glow in every sermon. As the body without the spirit is dead, being alone; so all our ministrations will be but poor things without this heavenly animation.

3. We should pray much for this invaluable blessing.

4. We should meditate much on those truths which are of a melting, tender nature, and labor to fill our hearts with glowing zeal for him who bled and died for us.

5. We should carefully study the lives and characters of those men who have been models of earnestness and tenderness in preaching the Gospel.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### POPULAR PREACHING.

IT is estimated that there are not less than fifty thousand sermons preached in the United States every week. It is not improbable that ministers do, on an average, preach four or five thousand sermons in their life-time. In any view of the subject of popular preaching, it must be a matter of deep concern to every wise and good man that this proclamation of the Gospel should be made in a proper way. To ministers themselves, it should be an absorbing matter of inquiry, How may we most effectually impress the truths we preach on the generation whose ears we may ✓ secure? An inquiry of greater practical importance could hardly be made.

Faith cometh by hearing the Word of God. Therefore, so long as there is true piety in the world, the godly will feel an interest in the subject of preaching.

Of late a good deal has been said in some quarters respecting the style proper for the pulpit. Some prefer extreme plainness, and some a high polish. No doubt something is due to the peculiar talents of each speaker, and something also to the character of each congregation. Extremes should be avoided. Nor is it improbable that some doubt will still remain on the best minds, after all that shall be said. Yet it is very important that we have correct principles by which to decide such questions. The following hints, chiefly in the words of others, are offered for reflection :

“ Moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught



the people knowledge : yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words ; and that which was written was upright, even words of truth." Eccl. xii., 9, 10. From this passage it is plain that sound instruction is always to be sought in preaching ; that the best preachers take great pains, and that some words are better adapted than others to produce the desired result. / 2 3

Paul says : " We use great plainness of speech : and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face," etc. 2 Cor. iii., 12, 13. Again : " In the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." 1 Cor. xiv., 19. It is evident the apostle would have his hearers know his whole meaning. A style that obscures the sense is never good.

Still the question recurs, What is the best style for the pulpit ? Let us hear what some of the mighty dead have said on the subject.

Richard Sibbes was one of the best preachers and writers of his day. He was greatly esteemed by Archbishop Usher. He wrote many works, but the most celebrated are *The Soul's Conflict* and *The Bruised Reed*. Both of these are commended by Izaak Walton in his will. The latter of these works was very helpful to Richard Baxter in his early religious experience, and is to this day one of the best treatises to put into the hands of weak Christians. ✓ In it he says : " Divines should take heed likewise that they hide not their meaning in *dark speeches*, speaking in the clouds. Truth feareth nothing so much as concealment, and desireth nothing so much as clearly to be laid open to the view of all ; when it is most naked, it is most lovely and powerful.

" Our blessed Saviour, as he took our nature upon him,

so he took upon him our *familiar* manner of *speech*: which was part of his voluntary abasement. St. Paul was a profound man (1 Thess. ii., 7), yet became as a *nurse* to the weaker sort." He says more to the same effect.

William Perkins was one of the most voluminous writers of his day. He enjoyed a high reputation, not only in England, but on the Continent. The translation of his works into Dutch drew forth an attack from Arminius. This is said to have led to the calling of the Synod of Dort. Piety and good sense, rather than ingenuity and logical power, characterize his writings. He seems to have laid out his whole strength in making things plain. It is pleasing to see that, after lying for a time rather in obscurity, his works begin to be again sought after. He says: "It is no disgrace for learned ministers in a plain and familiar manner to catechize. This is to lay the foundation, without which all labor in preaching is vain. . . . It is a fault in many that they love to hear sermons which are beyond their reach, in which they stand and wonder at the preacher; and plain preaching is little respected of such."

Bishop Hall, of whose works Bayle says that they abound with fine thoughts, excellent morality, and a great deal of piety, and whose judgment and acuteness have won for him the title of the English Seneca, says: "Much ornament is no good sign; painting of the face argues an ill complexion of body, or a worse mind. Truth hath a face both honest and comely, and looks best in her own colors. But, above all, divine truth is most fair, and scorns to borrow beauty of man's wit or tongue. She loves to come forth in her native grace, like a princely matron. . . . She is to command reverence and be kneeled to, not to be treated with levity. To prank her up in vain dresses and fashions is most abhorrent from her nature. . . . She would be plain, but not base nor sluttish. She would be clad not tawdry,

yet not in rags; she likes as little to be set out basely as to seem credited with gay colors. It is no small wisdom to know her proper dress, but more to follow it, and so to keep the mean, that, while we please her, we disquiet not the beholders."

John Flavel, whose success as a preacher and writer is well known, in introducing his *Treatise on Providence*, says: "I have not had much regard to the dress and ornament in which this discourse is to go abroad, for I am debtor both to the strong and the weak, the wise and the foolish. And in all my observation, I have not found that ever God hath much use of labored periods, rhetorical flourishes, and elegancies to improve the power of religion in the world. Yea, I have observed how Providence hath sometimes rebuked good men, when upon other subjects they have too much affected these pedantic fooleries, in withdrawing from them its usual aids, and exposing them to shame."

Edward Parsons, who edited Charnock's works, describing a good minister of Jesus Christ, says: "Knowing that however men are *pleased*, they can not be *converted* by tropes and figures, by oratorical gesticulations, or by any arts exclusively human, he directs his attention solely to the Word of truth. By that truth alone, as applied by the Holy Spirit, he commends himself to every man's conscience in the name of God; and by that truth alone his ministerial usefulness is secured. He is therefore supremely studious of the subject-matter of his sermons; and, next to the inspired volume, he attaches the highest value to those writings which he finds most eminently enriched with theological sentiments; and no author is too doctrinal for him, who is at the same time experimental and practical."

John Brown, of Haddington, in his sixth Tract, has some



very solemn thoughts, which he puts into the mouth of a pastor. He says: "Where is my constant travailing in birth till Christ be formed in the souls of men? Where are the agonies which my heart hath undergone, both in the night and the day, while the saving, the sanctifying presence of God was denied to me or to my flock? Nay, how often hath pride been almost *all in all* to me! How often it hath chosen my companions! my dress! my victuals!—hath chosen my text, my subject, my language! how often indited my thoughts! and, to the reproach, the blasting of the Gospel, hath decked my sermon with tawdry ornaments and fancies, as if it had been a stage play! how often it hath blunted Jesus's sharp arrows of truth with its swollen bombast or silken smoothness!"

The elder President Edwards says: "I do not desire that the sword of the Spirit should be sheathed or gently handled by ministers; but let it be used as a two-edged sword, to pierce even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, joints and marrow; let conscience be dealt with, without any compliments; let ministers handle it in flaming fire, without having any more mercy on it than the furnace has on those metals that are tried in it."

John Howe says: "In such a time, when the Spirit of the Lord shall be poured forth plentifully, sure ministers shall have their proportionable share. And when such a time as that shall come, I believe you will hear much other kind of sermons, or they will who shall live to such a time, than you are wont to do nowadays; souls will surely be dealt withal at another kind of rate."

Similar extracts might easily be taken from a multitude of writers no less revered in the Christian world. They are given almost without comment, because they speak clearly, and the weight of their opinions would not in any way be increased by observations upon them.

If any one should ask, What then can be done to improve the excellence of preaching? take these hints.

We must, on all proper occasions, believe and show that such elevation is desirable and necessary. If we are doing well enough, the idea of doing better is fanciful. On such a subject it is easy to be rash, inflame angry feelings, and awaken unprofitable controversies. But is it not true that the ministry needs elevation in fervent piety, burning zeal, a wise address, and solid learning? Have we already attained, or are we already perfect? Surely we might do much better than we are doing. With the zeal of Gilbert Tennent, John Blair Smith, or James Robinson; with the piety of Eastburn, David Brainerd, or J. W. Douglass; with the address of William Nevins, John Breckinridge, or Elias Cornelius; with the intellectual resources of William Graham, James Blair, or John Witherspoon, and with the eloquence of Davies, Mason, Larned, and Summerfield, what a ministry we should have. These were wonderful men, and knew it not. But they were what they were, chiefly by having but one object before them—the glory of God in the salvation of men. Whatever they did, they ✓  
did it with their might, and in the best way they could.

All extensive improvement must be begun early in life. ✓  
Quintilian would not have his orator learn a bad accent even in the nursery. Train up a child in the way he should not go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, is as true as the words of Solomon in the converse. A reason is, we are depraved. Dr. Watts says: “It is much more difficult to unlearn than to learn.” All experience shows this to be true. Nursery and family training need vast improvements. Signor Ferrari says: “Little or no attention is paid to the tone in which children speak; consequently they too often contract bad habits of intonation from the earliest age; and, as they grow up, what is mere

habitual tone is mistaken for their natural voice. From this inattention to intonation in early years proceeds much difficulty in the voice for singing; and it is not unfrequently the cause of diseases of the throat and chest. It is but a part of this evil system that a most injurious habit prevails among the young ladies of the present day of speaking in a subdued, muffled tone, or what might be called a semi-falsetto, in consequence of which very few natural voices are heard. It must be understood I speak more particularly of English ladies, as foreigners generally speak in the natural tone of their voice. I have no hesitation in saying that hundreds of young ladies bring upon themselves serious chest affections from a bad habit of speaking and singing."

In many of our schools and colleges, the course of study includes, as many think, too great a variety. There seems to be solidity in the plea. The old course of mathematical and classical study was better for barristers and preachers, because it made them more perfect masters of what they knew, and more thoroughly disciplined the thinking powers.

Any great and extensive improvement must be the result of long and patient industry. Fitful efforts will result in no profit. There must be a plan, and it must be followed up. William Tennent is reported to have said, that if a man knew he had but three years to live, and must preach, he should study two of them. He distinguished between study, and moping over a book or a manuscript.

We must have better libraries for our pastors. I believe I owe as much to the professors who taught me as any pupil they ever had. I acknowledge this with deep gratitude. But I think the libraries I consulted, often under the direction of professors, were of more value to me than all their lectures. Many others entertain the same opinion.



It is painful to see how meagre is the supply of good books owned by many of our preachers.

Church authorities should pay more attention to candidates and licentiates. They should take more notice of them, and give them encouragement, caution, and direction, as they may need it. If this can not be done by the body itself, let it be done by committees. Here is a field wide open to the older members of every church court. The latter part of the lives of many venerable men in all the churches of our own land was rendered beautiful and useful by their good advice to the sons of the prophets. There are men now living who will never forget their paternal kindness and counsel.

Wherever it can be done, young ministers should spend some time in missionary labor. It is one of the best schools on earth. It is a very pleasant kind of labor, too. Whoever spent a part of his early life in this service, and did not delight to speak of it in his old age?

But the great want is the want of more religion. Should the blessed Spirit be poured out copiously on ministers and churches for a series of years, as was the case in many parts of this country about a century ago, how men would pray, and preach, and exhort, and live! Oh, that we were all baptized with fire from heaven!

Yet it can not be denied that there are faults in our preaching which ought to be corrected. John Angell James says: "It is my sad and serious belief that if the evangelical pulpit is losing its power, it is just because it is losing sight of its object and its aim. The cultivation of the intellect and the advancement of knowledge, in the present day, are lifting both preachers and hearers above the plain and simple Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sermons are with many persons no longer heard as the Word of God, but as the word of man; not as means of grace and aids

to salvation, but as intellectual exercises on religious topics, for the gratification of taste, intellect, and imagination on Sunday. And it must be confessed that the preachers of them are, by their artificial and excessive elaboration, and the introduction of new topics, teaching their hearers so to regard them, and are training them thus to be a kind of amateur hearers of sermons."

Some do not study and prune their discourses as they should. A venerable minister in Vermont used to say that the best criticism he ever received on his preaching was from a little boy who sat right at his feet, looking up into his face, as he was preaching in a crowded room of a private house. As he was going on very earnestly, the little fellow spoke out, "*You said that afore.*"

Any argument is weakened by mere verbiage. "In war, Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great owed their success to the introduction of the *phalanx*. Napoleon gained his victories by concentrating his forces upon a single point." One pithy, pointed, pertinent saying is worth an hour's wishy-washy, feebly argued, ill digested declamation.

Nor should we labor to *please* men, but rather to *trouble* them unless they will renounce their sins. Louis XIV. of France said one day to Massillon, "I have heard many great orators in my chapel, and have always been satisfied with them; but every time I hear you, I am *dissatisfied with myself.*"

Preachers ought to be fully awake to their calling, and to the day in which they live. They ought to know their time. They should not let the men of the world outstrip their zeal and enterprise. Harris says: "The office of the ministry will be generally found to include three classes—men behind their day, men before their day, and men of their day. Those behind their day are always preaching

to a former age, and, conscious of alarm at every onward movement, they feel as little sympathy with their times as their times feel for them. Those who are before their day are generally few in number; nor is it, perhaps, desirable that they should be numerous, though the office they fill is somewhat like that of the ancient prophet, pointing to the future, and preparing the Church for its arrival. Standing on a loftier eminence than their contemporaries, their eye sweeps an ampler horizon, and though the distant speck, no larger than a man's hand, enables them to speak of subjects which sound strange to the multitude, their voice never ceases to echo in the Church, correcting its views, animating its activity, and enlarging its expectations. The men of their day are those, who, marking its peculiarities, and falling in with its movements, accelerate its progress toward a better state of things. A considerable number of such the Church contains at present."

In every sermon, in every sentence, we should try to accomplish something. We must live, and pray, and study, and preach to effect men's salvation. Richard Baxter says: "Satan will not be charmed out of his possession; we must lay siege to the souls of sinners, which are his garrison, and find out where its chief strength lieth, and lay the battery of God's ordinance against it, and ply it close till a breach be made; and then suffer them not by their shifts to make it up again; but find out their common objections, and give them a full and satisfactory answer."

One difficulty attending modern, and especially American preaching, is that so vast an amount of public instruction is required of our pastors. In his *Modern Pulpit*, Vaughan says: "Even great men, if they must preach often, can preach great sermons only very rarely. The few preachers of our time who have resolved not to appear in the pulpit, except as they could bring some elaborate performance



before the people, have been obliged to restrict their pulpit labors to a single sermon a week, and even that amount of such labor has proved to be beyond their powers. In the case of preachers who are at full liberty to choose their occasions, this uniform elevation in preaching may be practical; but in the case even of the most able men, who do not possess that liberty, it must be otherwise."

John Howe says: "I think it may be worth our while to tell you a short passage which was not long ago told me by a person whose name is well known in London, and I hope there is savor in it yet, Dr. Thomas Goodwin, at such time as he was President of Magdalen College, in Oxford; there I had the passage from him. He told me that being himself, in the time of his youth, a student at Cambridge, and having heard much of Mr. Rodgers, of Didham, in Essex, purposely he took a journey from Cambridge to Didham to hear him preach on his lecture-day, a lecture then so strangely thronged and frequented, that to those who came not very early, there was no possibility of getting room in that spacious, large church. Mr. Rodgers was, as he told me, at that time he heard him, on the subject of discourse, that hath been for some time the subject of mine, the Scriptures. And in that sermon he falls into an expostulation with the people about their neglect of the Bible. I am afraid it is more neglected in our days. He personates God to the people, telling them, 'Well, I have trusted you so long with my Bible; you have slighted it; it lies in such and such houses, all covered with dust and cobwebs; you care not to look into it. Do you use my Bible so? Well! you have my Bible no longer.' And he takes up the Bible from the cushion, and seemed as if he were going away with it and carrying it from them; but turns immediately and personates the people to God, falling down on his knees, and cries and pleads most earnestly, 'Lord,

whatsoever thou doest to us, take not thy Bible from us: kill our children; burn our houses; destroy our goods; only spare us thy Bible.' And then he personates God again to the people: 'Say you so? Well, I will try you a while longer, and here is my Bible for you. I will see how you will use it, whether you will love it more, whether you will value it more, whether you will observe it more, whether you will practice it more, and live more according to it.' But by these actions, as the Doctor told me, he put all the congregation in so strange a posture that he never saw any congregation in his life: the place was a mere Bochim, the people generally, as it were, deluged with their own tears; and he told me that he himself, when he got out, and was to take horse again to be gone, he was fain to hang a quarter of an hour upon the neck of his horse weeping, before he had power to mount, so strange an impression was there made upon him, and generally upon the people, by having ✓ been thus expostulated with for the neglect of the Bible."

South says: "Nothing in nature can be more absurd, irrational, and contrary to the very design and end of speaking, than an obscure discourse; for in that case the preacher may as well *leave* his *tongue* and the auditors their *ears* behind them; as neither he communicates, nor they understand any more of his mind and meaning, after he has spoken to them, than they did before. And yet, as ridiculous as such fustian bombast from the pulpit is, none are so transported and pleased with it as those who least understand it. For still the greatest admirers of it are the grossest, the most ignorant and illiterate people, who, of all men, are the fondest of high-flown metaphors and allegories."

Speaking of the style of the apostles, he further adds that "it was easy, obvious, and familiar; with nothing in it ✓ strained or far-fetched; no affected scheme, no airy fancies

above the reach or relish of an ordinary apprehension ; no, nothing of all this ; but their grand subject was truth, and, consequently, above all those petty arts and poor additions ; as not being capable of any greater lustre or advantage than to appear just as it is. For there is a certain majesty in plainness ; as the proclamation of a prince never frisks it in tropes or fine conceits, in numerous and well-turned periods, but commands in sober, natural expressions. A substantial beauty, as it comes out of the hands of nature, needs neither paint or patch ; things never made to adorn, but to cover something that would be hid. To adorn and to clothe them is to cover them, and that to obscure them. The eternal salvation and damnation of souls are not things to be treated of with jests and witticisms. And he who thinks to furnish himself out of plays and romances with language for the pulpit, shows himself much fitter to act a part in the revels than for the cure of souls.”

Any man who really helps to elevate the character of popular preaching renders a great public service.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### MOOTED POINTS ABOUT PREACHING.

SOME questions respecting preaching have been much handled, and often with vehemence. It is right that something should here be said on them.

I. What is the best method of delivering sermons? The following methods are more or less in use: 1. Some make no *special* preparation for any given sermon; but rely wholly on their general acquaintance with theological truth and the wants of the people. Such commonly, though not always, fall short of what was reasonably expected of them in the pulpit. Their ordinary discourses do not rise above their best tone of conversation, and are not at all equal to their speeches in church courts or popular assemblies. In strange places they sometimes are very able, and make a profound impression by presenting a summary of their religious belief, or by falling into a vein of thought familiar to themselves, yet new to their hearers. But habitually in their own pulpits they are comparatively ✓ flat and feeble. Indeed, it is often worse than this. As Saul wandered over the hills of Judea, going he knew not where, in quest of his father's asses, so these men often rove about in quest of something to say, and can not find it. The sight of them is pitiful. One of the sad things is that their evil habits grow upon them. They become stubborn, perhaps irritable, and not unfrequently complain and scold. If a man would habitually preach well, he must habitually make special preparation for the pulpit. ✓ If without sloth or neglect on his part he should be unable

to make careful preparation for some unexpected occasion, he may then safely cast himself upon God's mercy, and confidently ask for unusual aid, nor will he ask in vain. 2. Some write out fully every word of their sermons, and then carry their manuscripts into the pulpit, and servilely read the whole. If the discourse was written without much study and under no considerable excitement, this is the very poorest method of preaching. But where the thoughts are the result of intense study and much careful thought and arrangement, and the action in reading at all corresponds to the weight of the matter, this way may and often does greatly edify a congregation. The best and most effective sermons of the elder Edwards were read closely. The Rev. Samuel Davies found his temperament so excitable, that he was compelled to rule himself down to the very words he had written and approved in the solitude of his study. Dr. Chalmers made a hearty effort to disuse his manuscript, but utterly failed. His own account of his failure is amusing. Now who is so bold as to say that these men did not know how to preach? They were giants in pulpit power. So have been many others in this and other lands. Some men who were once good preachers in a free use of notes, have given up the use of them, and persuade themselves that they do better, but their friends think differently.

2. B.  
The authority of Calvin is often cited to discourage the use of a manuscript. In his letter to Somerset, he thus speaks: "The people must be taught in such a manner that they may be inwardly convinced and made to feel the truth of what the Bible says, that the Word is a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. I say this to your highness because there is too little of living preaching in your

kingdom, sermons there being mostly read and recited. I understand well enough what obligates you to adopt this method; there are few good, useful preachers, such as you have, and you fear that levity and foolish imaginations might be the consequence, as is often the case, by the introduction of a new system. But all this must yield to the command of Christ, which orders the preaching of the Gospel. No possible danger must be permitted to abridge the liberty of the Spirit of God, or prevent his free course among those whom he has adorned with his grace for the edifying of the Church."

When reading is not "living preaching," it is surely to be condemned. But Calvin would not have called the preaching of Edwards, Davies, or Chalmers lifeless.

3. Others have made equally full and careful preparation, have carried their written discourse into the pulpit, and, being very familiar with its large, open writing, have only occasionally glanced at it. Some of the best preachers of the last generation carried out this method. It gave them as great exactness as servile readers had, while it left them much freedom of manner. It of course was partially preaching from memory. Yet it had more ease and less stiffness than if the manuscript were not present for use, if necessary. 4. Others write fully, and then thoroughly commit to memory. This was the practice of Dr. John Witherspoon, of the last century. He could commit his sermon by twice reading it over. The great objection to this method is that it is apt to make the sermon seem like a recitation, as it in fact is. But all the best speaking on the stage is an exact recitation of another man's composition; yet who ever seemed to speak more naturally than Garrick? Whitefield's most effective discourses were preached from memory. In the United States of America, very few of his contemporaries equaled the late Dr.



Nevins, of Baltimore, and he preached entirely from memory. His manner was very easy, solemn, and impressive, ✓ full of animation, and very pungent. 5. Another method, practiced by some of the best modern preachers, was carefully to compose the whole discourse in the mind, committing it to memory as it was composed, and then deliver it to a word as it was laid away in the mind. This was the usual method of that great, humble, and ingenious preacher, the late Dr. George A. Baxter, of Virginia. But his mind was very unusual in its grasp and in its retentiveness. This process was to him but slightly laborious. The objections to it are that it is quite unattainable by the majority of ministers, and that some, who attain it in part, are not such masters of their subject and thoughts as to be able to proceed with freedom, lest they should lose the thread of their discourse. 6. The last method is fully to study the subject, be master of its strong points, arrange them with care, and trust to the occasion for words and ↓ expressions, by which fitly to put others in possession of our thoughts and sentiments. Many who have employed a different method have commended this. This has been the plan of many of the best speakers in national assemblies and in the pulpit. Its advantages are many and obvious. *a.* It leaves both body and mind free from trammel. *b.* It gives to the preacher the great advantages arising from the presence of an audience. This method arouses all one's power of thought and speech. It enables him to avail himself of any incident of the hour, to impress his thoughts on the people. *c.* It seems to have been the method of preachers in the primitive Church. At least many think this was their habit. They were model preachers. *d.* It allows of those valuable digressions and applications of truth, which often give the highest effect to truth. Whoever has adopted this method and succeeded at it,

never regretted his course when he reviewed his life of labor in the pulpit. Nor have pious and sensible people ever desired him to change his habits on this subject, though some weak people profess to think that a man is never well prepared to preach unless his sermon is fully written out. But the truth is, there is as much strictly extemporaneous writing as speaking. And such writing in the seclusion of a closet seldom has the force of like speaking before an audience. The rule is, Let every man by fair and thorough trial find out wherein his great strength lies, and how he may best preach, and then let him pursue that method.

II. What ought a minister to think respecting his success or want of success in preaching? This and questions kindred to it have produced great concern in many minds. On this subject the following truths ought to be regarded as settled: 1. Any real and desirable success—success that will stand the test of time and of the judgment-day—is the gift of God—a great favor and mercy. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God gives the increase. He is the sovereign disposer of all such mercies. He is determined to teach all who will be taught, that it is not of him that will-eth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. Paul himself had at times apparently small success. Then again a multitude believed. Success cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South, but God is the judge of all. If a man can not make one hair of his head black or white, surely he can not control the causes which effect a great moral revolution in the human heart. It is mere vanity for man to pretend to control the powers of the world to come. The Holy Spirit divideth his gifts severally as he will. 2. Men sow that they may reap; and, by the divine blessing, ordinarily careful culture of the soil is followed by increase. The Gos-

pel is the fit means of raising men from their death in sin to the life of righteousness. It is still the power of God unto salvation; and the Holy Spirit, in answer to Christ's intercession and the prayers of saints, is still poured out in large measure. So that success is possible. It is actually attained by many. 3. Therefore, if one is not successful in his ministry, it ought to lead to great heart-searchings, and a careful review of one's plans and methods of dealing with men's souls, that if possible the hinderance may be discovered and removed. He that winneth souls is wise. Are our ways wise? Paul travailed in birth till Christ was formed in those whose salvation he sought. Are we often in an agony of love for the perishing? Do we preach the truth—the whole truth? Do we preach with all our hearts? Are our duties performed perfunctorily? "That is a bad sermon, by whatever great name it is recommended, which has no effect on the congregation," said the late Archbishop Sumner. And he was right. Isa. lv., 10, 11. God's Word is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. It may prick men in the heart, or it may cut them to the heart; it may send them away weeping, or they may go away reviling; but, when rightly presented, it is sure to have some effect on saint or sinner, or both. 4. It is one of the greatest trials of a good man's life to see things dying out under his ministry, to be compelled to cry out, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Sad, indeed, was the commission of the evangelical prophet, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Isa. vi., 9, 10. If in this day any one has so dole-



ful a lot, let him not fret and fume, and play the fool, but in adoring submission bow to the sovereign will of God, and plead that many may yet see the Sun of righteousness arising on his labors, and granting him much rich fruit. No man deserves to be a minister, or to have any success in that sacred office. In this sense none is worthy. It is an act of mere grace that puts any one into the ministry, or in the least blesses his labors. Let no man complain of God, yet we may complain to God. 5. The want of success often leads to sourness of temper, and makes men quarrel with their generation. This should not be. Much less should men lay themselves liable to the charge of being pulpit scolds. A sour temper destroys ministerial comfort, and is an end to usefulness. 6. Persevere and cultivate confidence in God. Trust him in the darkest hour. Cecil: "Faith is the master-spring of a minister. Hell is before me, and thousands of souls shut up there in everlasting agonies; Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into the bottomless abyss; he sends me to proclaim his ability and his love; I want no fourth idea! every fourth idea is contemptible! every fourth idea is a grand impertinence." Oh, have faith in God!

III. Without dwelling longer on these and like questions, let the reader duly consider the following hints on preaching given by different authors. They virtually answer many questions. The following pithy sentences are from some unknown source: "Make no apologies. If you have the Lord's message, declare it; if not, hold your peace. Have short preface and introductions. Say your best things first, and stop before you get prosy. Do not spoil the appetite for dinner by too much thin soup. Leave yourself out of the pulpit, and take Jesus in. Defend the Gospel, and let the Lord defend you and your character.

"Do not get excited too soon. Do not run away from

your hearers. Engine driving-wheels whirl fast on an icy track; but when they draw any thing, they go slower. It takes a cold hammer to bend hot iron. Heat up the people, but keep the hammer wet and cool; do not bawl and scream. Too much water stops mill wheels, and too much noise drowns sense. Powder is not shot. Thunder is harmless. Lightning kills. If you have lightning, you can afford to thunder. Do not abuse the faithful souls who come to meeting on rainy days, because others are too lazy to attend. Preach the best to the smallest assemblies. Jesus preached to one woman at the well, and she got all Samaria out to hear him next time.

“Do not repeat sentences, saying, As I said before. If you said it before, say something else after. Do not end sentences, passages of Scripture, or quotations, with ‘and so forth;’ say what you mean and stop. Leave out all words you can not define. Stop preaching, and talk to folks. Come down from your stilted ways and sacred tones, and ‘become as a little child.’ Tell stories; Jesus did, and the common people heard him gladly. Relate your experience; Paul did, and you can hardly do better than he. One fact that you have seen or felt is worth a bushel of mouldy ideas dug out of mouldier books. Change the subject, if it goes hard. Do not preach till the middle of your sermon buries the beginning, and is buried by the end. Beware of long prayers, except in your closet. Where weariness begins, devotion ends. Look people in the face, and live as if you are not ashamed of them.”

In his Journal of Health, Dr. Hall tells “How to preach effectively, and with the least wear and tear of mental and physical strength.

- “1. Have thorough knowledge of your subject.
- “2. Be deeply impressed with its importance.
- “3. Open the discourse with an earnest enunciation, in

concise language, of some striking truth; this will inevitably wake up attention.

“4. Then plunge *in medias res*, with the fervor of a man who is speaking for the last time as to himself, or as to some one or more hearers, and upon whose skirts hangs the blood of immortal souls.

“5. As soon as the burden of the discourse is delivered, sit down, even if you have been speaking but twenty minutes, but fifteen, but ten! The value of a discourse is not its length, but the nailing home of some great truth on the understanding and the conscience; and be assured that such a truth is there for life. Thus you will preach easily for yourself, profitably to those who hear you.”

IV. A question much discussed in private circles and somewhat also in books is, What use may preachers make of bold rhetorical figures, parables, and anecdotes? Parker has more than a dozen pages on the subject. Without attempting to exhaust the subject, these hints are offered. It is safe for us to follow the usual course of good speakers in the use of figures of speech. It is further safe for us to follow the examples set us by inspired men. Jesus Christ called Herod a fox. Paul wrote of Nero as a lion. This was a bold use of language. But it was every way lawful. Preachers are not at liberty to make a new speech for the people. Their object is to communicate truth in terms as little liable to misapprehension as possible. The very boldest figures of speech, and the richest variety of good figures, are found in the Word of God. Concerning parables, we may certainly use those we find in Scripture—in all between thirty and forty. In a regular ministry of some standing, all those given in the New Testament will be found of excellent use. They do make very clear the matters on which they are spoken. In his *Art of Thinking*, Lord Kaimes has made considerable use of this spe-



cies of writing, and in some cases with pleasing success. But good parables are scarce. It is surprising how few there are. The difficulty of constructing a parable that is better than a clear and direct mode of speech is exceedingly great. Most that we have are from the lips of the blessed Saviour, whose parables were perfect, and exactly suited his discourse.

The use of anecdote may be much more extensive. History furnishes great numbers of them. The Percy Anecdotes are generally in good taste, and beautifully illustrate many points in faith and living.

That which has brought all forms of highly figurative speech into disrepute with many has been the want of good taste and sound judgment. Wild extravagance is always to be avoided. Coarseness of language and conception is as bad as awkwardness and feebleness of expression.

#### CONCLUSION.

1. Let nothing that has been said awaken a doubt whether the work of the ministry is a good work. Nothing on this earth compares with it for excellence. Has the world ever seen a more sober, discreet writer than Thomas Scott, the commentator? Yet he said: "With all my discouragements and sinful despondency, in my latter moments I can think of no work worth doing compared with this. Had I a thousand lives, I would willingly spend them in it; and had I as many sons, I should gladly devote them to it." Thomas Boston tells us that his earliest desires for the ministry arose from this thought, "because of all men, ministers were most taken up about spiritual things." No work is a thousandth part as good as that of preaching Christ, and winning souls to him.

2. It is by no means peculiar to the ministry that we have to educate a considerable number to get a few distin-

guished men. It has always been so. It must continue to be so. Meantime the men of middling talents and qualifications are they in every generation who form the rank and file in the army of the Captain of our salvation. Let us in this, as in all other good works, in the morning sow our seed, and in the evening not withhold our hand. It is a great thing to raise up one man to preach the Gospel.

3. A judicious writer says that "religion without the help of a spiritual ministry is unable to plant itself." All history confirms this assertion. It also declares that no large portion of the world has ever had an adequate supply of religious teachers so long as it depended on those who were trained abroad. It is therefore good policy to plant in each considerable portion of our territory proper schools of every grade for raising up an able, faithful, learned ministry; and to encourage our foreign missionaries, as soon as practicable, to found schools for the instruction of native teachers, helpers, and preachers, wherever they go. Let not this cause be forsaken.

4. And now shall we not all, by the best possible use of our time, do all in our power to be scribes well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and to be successful preachers of righteousness? Whatever may be our Church relations, it is certain that the next quarter of a century will demand the highest qualifications any of us can attain. The world lies in wickedness, the enemy is always busy, the judgment, wherein we must all give an account for the use we have made of our time and faculties, is rapidly approaching, heaven is inviting, hell is threatening, souls are perishing.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE USE OF PROVERBS.

JOHNSON defines a proverb to be "a short sentence frequently repeated by the people; an adage; an observation commonly received or uttered." This is now the common acceptation of the word. But in Scripture it has a much more extended meaning. In Isaiah xiv., 4, it is used as a name for a song that includes more than twenty verses. It is aside from the main object of this book critically to consider the difference between a proverb and a parable. In this chapter the word is used in the sense of a brief, weighty sentence, a sentence containing much in a little.

Chesterfield says: "No man of fashion ever uses a proverb." If this is so, it only proves how wit and wisdom have forsaken that class of men.

The very word *proverb* intimates that it is a substitute for a lengthened address—the argument or case summed up in few words. The Hebrew word translated proverb signifies a maxim of high value or authority. The verb forming the root of the word means to rule or control. Because of the power over the human mind of an acute, weighty sentence, there is a fitness in its use. Scott: "Such short maxims, comprehending much instruction in a few words, and conveying their own evidence with them, are well suited to direct the conduct, without overburdening the memory, or perplexing the mind with abstract reasonings; and there are in all countries old proverbs or common sayings which have great influence on the opinions and actions of mankind." Sibbes: "How many have been refreshed by one



short, apt, savory speech, which hath begotten, as it were, new spirits in them." Indeed, in every thing mankind have maxims by which they advance further both in opinion and practice. What can be done in arithmetic unless a man will admit that one and one make two? How can one learn geometry, if he either denies or knows not its axioms and postulates? We find the best treatises on law abounding in maxims; so that he who is master of them could hardly fail in a plain case to see how to decide. The same is true in every branch of science and philosophy. Nay, it is true in all the arts of life. But in nothing is there such scope for the use of proverbs as in religion, morals, and matters of prudence. The reason is that there are no subjects so comprehensive, so affecting many things, and suggesting so many valuable and weighty reflections.

It is worthy of note that all nations have had their sayings. The fame of the wise men of Greece rests upon their delivery of a few proverbs to their generation. Some of these are flat and feeble, and some of them very good. But there is reason for believing that a large part of the best moral maxims of ancient nations were drawn from inspiration. In proportion as mankind have been removed from the light of revelation have their proverbs been unsafe, unsound, and immoral. They may have been shrewd and even witty. On natural things they may have been correct. But as guides to moral and religious duty, they have commonly been corrupt and corrupting.

An advantage of this mode of instruction is that it is easily remembered. This is a great matter for the masses of mankind, who have but poor memories and little time for study. Moreover, it seems to be the embodiment of the wisdom and experience of wise men. Wholly to resist the power of a proverb looks like fighting against one's age or race. Yet many proverbs are misapplied, some of them

very easily and very often. Others are malignant. There arose at one time a set of men, among whom Rochefoucauld was distinguished, who threatened to deluge the world with selfish, refined, and misanthropic sayings, many of which are still repeated in the higher circles of polite society.

One of the most remarkable men of the eighteenth century was Edmund Burke. He has wonderfully controlled the opinions of mankind. Nothing has given him more power than, in the midst of his gorgeous descriptions and profound views, the dropping of some short sentence, which is so constructed as to have the force of a proverb, although it is not formally stated to be such. Most of these pithy sayings are good. Here are a few of this sort: "War and economy are things not easily reconciled;" "Sufficient appearances will never be wanting to those who have a mind to deceive themselves;" "When bad men combine, the good must associate;" "In all exertions of duty, something is to be hazarded;" "It is false virtue and plausible error that do the mischief." These are but samples of many good sayings in Burke's writings. They are always eloquent, commonly striking, often sublime, and generally sound. A good collection of them would be highly serviceable to statesmen. But Burke was a fallible man. He certainly erred when he said: "Vice itself loses half its evil by losing all its grossness." This sounds well, but is wholly untrue. The refined, genteel, polite swearer, drunkard, or murderer is even a worse man in his influence over others, and in the hopeless character of his viciousness, than if he were gross and unrefined. He is a Pharisee, and despises publicans. His refinements make him more blind to his perils than if he were cast out by society. Then his vices are so insinuating, and his manner so fascinating, that those of feeble virtue can not resist him.

In our language are some writers whose proverbs are excellent. One is Bishop Hall, whose wit is both sparkling and sanctified. It is impossible to read him without having the acuteness of the mind increased. He is sound and pious. Another writer of great excellence in this line is Matthew Henry, the commentator. His Notes, as he calls them, are a vast treasury of prudential and spiritual wisdom. There is also an excellent little work called *Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver*. It is written by Brooks. It is throughout a contribution to piety. The same may be said of the writings of the Rev. T. Adam.

Lord Kaimes' *Art of Thinking* is acute, but worldly-minded; not always sound, and sometimes misanthropic. That modern work which has had such a sale—*Lacon*—is not safe in the hands of the young, though much contained in it is very shrewd. The objections to Fielding's *Proverbs* are that he has collected good and bad, and thrown them all together; that some of them are very poor, and not worth remembering; and that they have not generally a high moral tone. A person of settled, good principles and mature judgment may read them, as also *Lacon* and Lord Kaimes. We greatly need in our language a good collection of proverbs for the common people.

The inspired book called *Proverbs* may be thus divided. The first nine chapters are commonly regarded as an introduction, full of instruction and exhortation to a young man dear to the writer. From the commencement of the tenth chapter, which begins with these words, "The Proverbs of Solomon," to the close of the sixteenth verse of the twenty-second chapter, are found the chief of the proverbs, strictly so called. From the beginning of the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second chapter to the close of the twenty-fourth chapter, is an exhortation to his son or his scholar. From the beginning of the twenty-fifth chapter to the close of



the twenty-ninth chapter, is a collection of Solomon's Proverbs, copied from his writings by inspired men in the days of Hezekiah. The thirtieth chapter contains the wise words of Agur, and the last chapter the words of King Lemuel. Against this book of Proverbs none of the objections lie which have been urged against some others. These proverbs are inspired. As such they are cited by Christ and his apostles. They do not mislead the honest and well-disposed. They are full of piety, and of the purest morality. A familiar acquaintance with them is greatly to be desired to make one wise. They are comprehensive and clear. They require nothing but an honest heart, and the amount of intellect common to the masses of thinking men, in order to understand them. They are full of light. The great fundamental rule for making progress in wisdom and knowledge is, Love the truth. No one ever said to Wisdom, "Thou art my sister," nor called Understanding his kinswoman, and yet lived and died a fool. "Love her, and she shall preserve thee," is a promise ever fulfilled.

Proverbs are of great use to preachers of righteousness. Solomon says: "And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs." Eccl. xii., 9. Selden: "The proverbs of several nations were much studied by Bishop Andrews, and the reason he gave was, because by them he knew the minds of several nations, which is a brave thing."

The following collection of proverbs may show the comprehensiveness and usefulness of this mode of instruction. The classification is not complete or perfect. The reader may be able to make one much better.

## WISDOM AND ITS ADVANTAGES.

Talk with the vulgar, think with the wise.—*English*.

He who has but one eye may be king among the blind.

—*T. Watson*.

Wisdom is that which makes men judge what are the best ends, and what the best means to attain them, and gives a man advantage of counsel and direction.—*Temple*.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.—*David*.

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.—*Ib*.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.—*Solomon*.

If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself.—*Ib*.

The fear of the Lord prolongeth days.—*Ib*.

Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.—*Job*.

Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.—*Paul*.

Call not him wise who is not wise for himself.—*Latin*.

## PROVIDENCE.

Man proposeth, God disposeth.—*French*.

Man appoints, God disappoints.—*English*.

Man intends, God superintends.—*Maxwell*.

He that will observe the wonderful providences of God, shall have wonderful providences of God to observe.—*Doddridge*.

Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.—*David*.

Man's goings are of the Lord: how can a man then understand his own way?—*Solomon*.

A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.—*Ib.*

The king's heart is in the hands of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.—*Ib.*

Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice.—*Jesus Christ.*

The very hairs of your head are all numbered.—*Ib.*

While I oversee the Church, Christ oversees me.—*Poly-carp.*

#### SIN AND MISERY.

Sin digged every grave.—*T. Watson.*

Death entered by sin.—*Paul.*

The wages of sin is death.—*Ib.*

He that hateth wisdom loveth death.—*Solomon.*

The way of transgressors is hard.—*Ib.*

Fools make a mock at sin.—*Ib.*

He that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death.—*Ib.*

Sin and misery are twin sisters; they were born the same day.

#### DILIGENCE AND SLOTH.

They that drive away time spur a free horse.—*Mason.*

Idleness is the devil's workshop.—*Melancthon.*

He who lives not by rule, lives not at all.—*J. Wesley.*

Drive your business, and it will not drive you.

The devil tempts all men, but the idle man tempts the devil.

As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send him.—*Solomon.*

The hand of the diligent shall bear rule; but the slothful shall be under tribute.—*Ib.*

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.—*Ib.*

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men.—*Ib.*



## LOVE AND HATRED.

I would not give one hour of brotherly love for a whole eternity of contention.—*Dr. Ruffner*.

Dr. John Mason and Dr. John Rogers lived and loved as brethren. When the former died, the latter said, "I feel as if I had lost a right arm."

Love your enemies.—*Jesus Christ*.

He that hateth his brother is a murderer.—*Ib.*

Love worketh no ill to his neighbor.—*Paul*.

Love is the fulfilling of the law.—*Ib.*

He that loveth is born of God.—*John*.

Hatred stirreth up strife; but love covereth all sins.—*Solomon*.

All the malignant passions are great tormentors.

## PRIDE AND HUMILITY.

It is bad to be both poor and proud.—*English*.

When we make profession of our faith, we stand; when we acknowledge our sins, or seek unto God for favor, we fall down; because the gesture of constancy becometh us best in the one, in the other the behavior of humility.—*Hooker*.

Only by pride cometh contention.—*Solomon*.

Before honor is humility.—*Ib.*

Pride goeth before destruction, the haughty spirit before a fall.—*Ib.*

When pride cometh, then cometh shame; but with the lowly is wisdom.—*Ib.*

By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honor, and life.—*Ib.*

## SELF-CONCEIT AND MODESTY.

Be not wise in your own conceit.—*Paul*.

Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him.—*Solomon*.

Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.—*Ib*.

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes; but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.—*Ib*.

The modesty of true science is well illustrated in Sir Isaac Newton, who said, "He that cometh after me may know something. I seem to be standing on the shore of the ocean of knowledge. I have picked up a few pebbles."

The kingdom of nature, like the kingdom of heaven, is entered only by little children.—*Bacon*.

## CLOSENESS AND LIBERALITY.

Charity gives itself riches; covetousness hoards itself poor.

It is more blessed to give than to receive.—*Jesus Christ*.

The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.—*Paul*.

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.—*Solomon*.

The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered.—*Ib*.

There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.—*Ib*.

Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.—*Ib*.

## COMPANY AND SOLITUDE.

Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee who thou art.—*Spanish*.

A great city is a great solitude.—*Latin*.

A crowd is not company.—*Dutch*.

Two green sticks and a dry one will make a fire.—*Jewish*.

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but the companion of fools shall be destroyed.—*Solomon*.

Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.—*Ib.*

## GOOD AND BAD TEMPER.

A blithe heart makes a blooming visage.—*Scotch*.

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken spirit drieth the heart.—*Solomon*.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.—*Ib.*

The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.—*Ib.*

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls.—*Ib.*

## CONTENTION AND QUIET.

A gude word is as soon spoken as an ill one.—*Scotch*.

It takes two to make a quarrel, though one may rail and revile.

Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife.—*Solomon*.

The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with.—*Ib.*



It is better to dwell in the corner of a housetop, than in a wide house with a brawling woman.—*Ib.*

It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman.—*Ib.*

Better is a dinner of herbs, where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.—*Ib.*

Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.—*Ib.*

#### HASTINESS AND CAUTION.

A hasty man never wants woe.—*Scotch.*

Soon ripe, soon rotten.—*Old English.*

Haste makes waste, and waste makes want.—*English.*

He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and a shame unto him.—*Solomon.*

Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.—*Ib.*

He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent.—*Ib.*

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.—*Ib.*

#### POVERTY AND RICHES.

Better go to heaven in rags than to hell in robes.

A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.—*David.*

Give me neither poverty nor riches; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.—*Agur.*

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith.—*Solomon.*

He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.—*Ib.*

The sleep of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eat much or little; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.—*Solomon*.

## FRAUD AND HONESTY.

The wolf is never fat, though he eat many sheep; for he wasteth all in anxiety and in flight.

He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.—*Solomon*.

A false balance is abomination to the Lord; but a just weight is his delight.—*Ib*.

He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in that which is greatest.—*Jesus Christ*.

## A GOOD AND BAD NAME.

The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot.—*Solomon*.

When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth; but when the wicked perish, there is shouting.—*Ib*.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.—*Ib*.

A good name is better than precious ointment.—*Ib*.

Half the honest men on earth started with no capital but their good name.

## SURETYSHIPS.

He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretyships is sure.—*Solomon*.

Take his garment that is surety for a stranger.—*Ib*.

If thou be surety for thy friend, if thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.—*Ib*.

One in a thousand may regret not having consented to be surety; but nine hundred and ninety in a thousand repent of their suretyship.

## MEDDLING.

He that passeth by, and meddleth with a strife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears.—*Solomon*.

## ACTING OUT A CHARACTER.

The shoemaker to his last.—*Latin*.

As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.—*Solomon*.

## COURAGE AND COWARDICE.

A guilty conscience needs no accuser.

A good conscience is the best flag to fight under.

When vice is bold, it is sad that virtue should be sneaking.—*Orton*.

## UNSEASONABLE MIRTH.

As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart.—*Solomon*.

## THE SIMPLE CLAIMING WISDOM.

The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools.—*Solomon*.

As a thorn goeth up into the hand of the drunkard, so is a parable in the mouth of fools.—*Ib.*

## MISPLACED CONFIDENCE.

Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, or a foot out of joint.—*Solomon*.

## WICKED EXULTATION.

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: lest the Lord see it, and it dis-



please him, and he turn away his wrath from him.—*Solomon*.

## MODERATION IN RECEIVING FAVORS.

Help yourself as long as you can.

Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbor's house, lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee.—*Solomon*.

## TRUTH AND ERROR.

Take heed what ye hear.—*Jesus Christ*.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.—*Paul*.

Buy the truth, and sell it not.—*Solomon*.

Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.—*Ib*.

Poison may kill as well as pistol.—*T. Watson*.

## ADVERSITY.

No cross, no crown.—*Penn*.

We never know the worth of water till the well goes dry.—*English*.

Crosses are ladders leading to heaven.

If pains are sharp, they can not be long; if they are long, they can not be sharp.

Adversity may make a man wise, and wisdom is better than wealth.

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.—*Solomon*.

## GOOD AND BAD CHILDREN.

A wise son maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.—*Solomon*.

## YOUTH AND OLD AGE.

Even a child is known by his doings.—*Solomon*.

Childhood and youth are vanity.—*Ib*.

The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.—*Ib.*

The flower of youth is never so beautiful as when it meekly bows and turns, like the heliotrope, to the Sun of righteousness.—*Buck.*

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

The borrower is servant to the lender.—*Solomon.*

Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.—*Ib.*

Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake thou not.—*Ib.*

Well doing is commonly less difficult than silent suffering.

The best maxim the heathen philosophers ever gave was —Know thyself.

If we did not so often indulge ourselves to the extent of what is lawful, we should less frequently do things that are unlawful.

Tell me how you feel and behave toward weak Christians, and I will tell you whether you are one of their number.

#### REMARKS.

1. If a man would lead a quiet and peaceable life, he will do well to make a collection of good proverbs relating to the government of the tongue.

2. Every man will do well often to read over the whole book of Proverbs, especially when in doubt about any prudential matter whatever.

3. It would be well for every man, and especially every preacher, to make a good collection of proverbs for his own use.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENTS.

MINISTERIAL wisdom may generally be estimated by one's principles and practice concerning excitements on the subject of religion. From want of will or capacity, some never distinguish between those which are genuine and those which are spurious. They have witnessed some excitements, in which enthusiasm was the dominant quality; and so they condemn all earnest and general attention to religion. This is unphilosophical and unscriptural. Others suppose all great engagedness in religion to be commendable, even if men are serving God with wild and violent passions.

As this is a subject of great difficulty, let us dwell on it a little for the purpose of stating some sound and fixed principles.

1. The human mind is so constituted that it must be excited in order to act. Even intellectual exertion will not be made without some excitement, such as love of knowledge or the love of pre-eminence. Indeed, excitement itself is nothing more nor less than that state of mind produced by the action of motives upon it; and without such action the whole mind would remain under a deep stupor. The powers of mind must be *brought* to action, the attention must be *fixed* by something, and this is excitement.

2. The next remark is that, although man is an active being, yet his action is produced by his volitions, and his volitions depend on his affections—desires or aversions—and these affections are nothing but excited feelings. In



other words, human agency must and will cease whenever excitement shall cease. Were excitement all gone, universal palsy would stiffen all man's mental powers.

3. There is also a proportion between the energy of the action and the strength of the feeling excited. Burke: *“Exquisite power has its seat in exquisite sensibilities.”* A feeble effort is the natural result of a feeble excitement. No man can act greatly unless he can feel strongly.

4. All true religion has its seat in the affections, or, which is the same thing, in excited feelings. The love of God, the love of man, repentance for sin, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, joy in the Holy Ghost, and generally the exercises of a renewed heart, are all affections of the mind in view of certain truths of religion.

5. Purely religious affections can not be too much excited. In this matter, the measure of our duty is the very highest degree of affection of which we are capable. No man can have his heart too much excited in love to God; for the law is, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” Nor can we be too sorry for having sinned against God, nor too much ashamed of our base ingratitude toward him. Nor can we rejoice too much in his grace and mercy manifested in the gift of his Son. Nor should this state of excitement be temporary or transient. We have the authority of an inspired apostle for saying, “It is good to be zealously affected *always* in a good thing.” If our excitement be purely religious and holy, it can not be excessive. Alas! that it should be so defective. There has always been too little of it. There is too little of it now.

6. On account of the union between our souls and our bodies, and on account of their reciprocal influence on each other, the mind can never be excited without producing

some effect on the body. Thus sorrow wastes vigor, fear produces paleness, anger quickens the pulse, warm benevolence makes the face to shine. When these effects on the body are produced by holy affections, they are neither hurtful nor sinful. It is neither injurious to health, nor to mental power, nor to moral virtue for one to weep when he is sad, or to tremble under a sense of the awful majesty of God. Nor is it unnatural or any way improper that peace in believing and joy in the Holy Ghost should give the countenance calmness, or even radiance. Nor am I aware that we should ever desire to avoid any effects of religious excitement on the body except for two reasons. The first is that precisely the same effects are sometimes produced by causes very remote from a holy excitement. The other is that there is danger lest these effects on the body be substituted for genuine piety. For example, when the animal system is relieved from a burden of grief by the shedding of tears, and a calmness and pleasant state of mind ensue, there is much danger lest all this be mistaken for conversion. Notwithstanding these dangers, the Scriptures themselves give us many examples of persons whose bodies were greatly affected by the state of their minds. Thus upon a remarkable discovery of the majesty and power of God, Habakkuk's lips quivered: rottenness entered into his bones, and he trembled in himself. Thus also John, in the Revelation, having an extraordinary vision of the glory of Christ, says, "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." These effects in nowise injured Habakkuk or John. ✓ 1 ✓ 2

7. There is danger, however, lest these bodily agitations become epidemic, and when they do, they are frequently regarded as supernatural visitations. Therefore the encouragement of them is not wise. And when they are placed in competition with spiritual religion, they ought to be openly opposed.



8. It follows that those preachers are not to be blamed under whose ministry bodily agitations are witnessed, provided there be nothing but reasonable and evangelical truth presented. The jailer was under the highest excitement when he sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" It was very common for people to fall down under the preaching of Whitefield and Davies, because religious truth and religious emotion were so new to them, and so powerful as to deprive them of strength.

9. Yet is there nothing to be dreaded more than a spirit of wild fanaticism. It will destroy or impair good religious prospects any where. If we would maintain the honor of God and the purity of religion, we must discriminate between genuine emotion and popular delusion, between the saving effects of spiritual emotion and the workings of a wild enthusiasm. The latter we must resist with firmness.

These remarks are intended as an introduction to some observations on the rules by which we may judge of the character of religious excitements.

✓ The first is that spurious excitements are frequently as irresistible as genuine; and therefore nothing in favor of any attention to religion can be drawn from the intensity of feeling accompanying it. Indeed, spurious excitements are often wholly unmanageable. The fire burns too vehemently to be put out. It will only die when it has consumed its materials. To plead for the genuineness of a religious excitement because it could not be arrested, is very unsound reasoning. Nothing but Omnipotence can control or arrest the passions of an excited populace in their assaults on private rights, yet all know the wickedness of their feelings. Saul was greatly excited when he lifted up his voice and wept, and said in the presence of his own men, and of David and his men, "I have sinned;"



but he sinned on. Judas was greatly excited when he threw down the money, and declared that he had betrayed innocent blood. But he went and hanged himself. The greatness of an excitement is no proof that it is genuine.

Nor is it any evidence that a religious excitement is holy and genuine because the subjects of it profess to have great spiritual enjoyment. The stony-ground hearers received the word with joy. Herod heard John gladly, and did many things. Satan has his devices for pleasing the people, as well as for disgusting them in matters of religion. What is more calculated to gratify a carnal mind than a strong delusion, leading one to think himself a Christian, and yet not disturbing his lusts? Besides, man is naturally fond of frolic, and many excitements in religion are so conducted as to suit this propensity. Unconverted men have as little natural enmity to a religious frolic as they have to one of another sort, provided always that the thing is not to last too long, and that then matters are to resume their usual course, and all parties are to be at liberty to return to their covetous practices, their selfish gratifications, their avoidance of rigid self-denial, and their indulgence of sin. Or, perhaps, the spirit of fanaticism may become rank, gross, and fixed, and may be leading on to most abiding and alarming results. In this course a very bad man may profess abundant pleasure. There is an indefinable sorcery in fanaticism. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light.

Moreover, those religious excitements, which are less powerful in their operations on the subjects of them when alone than when in social and public meetings, are very suspicious; and if the excitement is only kept up in such meetings, it is certainly spurious. In a vast congregation of people a very powerful excitement was reported. A minister, having spoken to them fully and reasonably, ad-

vised the congregation to disperse, and see if they could feel as much and pray as earnestly when alone as in a crowd. The advice was taken; the excitement ceased; and "the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle." 2 Sam. xix., 3. It is frequently the case, even when solid good is in progress, that there is too much said, too much done; too many meetings are held, and those too long continued. But when an excitement is wholly sustained by public means, and private and closet duties are very much neglected, we may rest assured that there is something sadly wrong. In like manner, when any man or number of men can pray fervently and very earnestly in a social meeting, yet when alone have but few words or little earnestness and less fervor, they may know that their hearts have deceived them. A great prophet teaches that when the revival should occur under the reign of Messias, it should drive men and women to their closets and their chambers to "mourn apart." Zach. xii., 10-14.

All religious excitements are to be dreaded, which make men careless or loose in their self-examinations, or which make them neglect the duty of watchfulness, or cause them to cease their jealousies over their own hearts. At no time more than in a general awakening should the extent, spirituality, and holiness of the law, the unspeakable deceitfulness and wickedness of the heart, the sovereignty of God, the trying fires of the last day, the perfectly lost and helpless state of the unregenerate, and the fullness and freeness of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, be kept constantly in view by ministers, Christians, and sinners. Religious characters formed under sermons which are a mere tissue of commonplaces, with vehement exhortations interlarded, will hardly be of any value. Let no man be afraid to examine meekly, thoroughly, fearlessly, and by scriptural



principle, all that is presented to his mind as claiming to be religious excitement. Should he be unwilling to weigh every thing by the correct standard, it is evident that either he is wrong, or that he wishes to support some error.

Those religious excitements which generate the spirit of vain boasting may be ranked as spurious. For "Charity vaunteth not itself, and is not easily puffed up." It is very painful to witness a spirit of noisy self-conceit, and forward pertness, and heady egotism, accompanying certain excitements, and producing pompous statements of success. From this spirit has arisen the attempt to introduce odious distinctions between zealous evangelical ministers, calling some of them "revival men," and thus expressing doubt whether all who make good profession of love to Christ rejoiced in the success of his cause. If a revival man is one who loves to see hearts broken in view of the cross of Christ, and labors to that end, then all converted ministers, not in a backslidden state, are revival men. If by this distinction it is intended to designate those only who have frequent and precious seasons of refreshing, it is a wrong use of the words; for many, whose ministry is exceedingly blessed, are never so called. Neither can a desire to witness a day of God's power, nor soundness of evangelical views, nor earnestness in publishing the Gospel, nor solid and lasting success in the ministry, be pleaded as exclusively belonging to those who regard themselves as the peculiar friends of revivals.

So far as we can understand the Bible (see Luke xix, 41; Phil. iii., 18), the master spirit in all pious hearts toward the unconverted ought to be that of tender compassion. It would have been very unseemly for the lame, the halt, and the blind, who had been cured by Christ, to have gone about beating their unfortunate countrymen who would not come to Jesus for healing. We are all bound to tell



men of the power, kindness, and grace of Christ, and to urge them to apply to him, and to lend them all the aid we can; but we are not at liberty to *quarrel* with men because they will not be reconciled to God. The two disciples did not know what manner of spirit they were of, when they wanted fire from heaven. One attempting to give an account of another, whom he wished to praise, said: "He is the holiest man you ever saw; he can not endure a sinner in his sight. I have seen him calm and social in the company of Christians, when a sinner would come in, and immediately he would appear uneasy, and his eyes begin to roll and flash fire." Paul gives a very different description of what a minister should be. See 2 Tim. ii., 24-26. The spirit of anger, fierceness, and bitterness is always wicked. "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Human passion is a poor thing to offer to God, however modified, refined, directed, or regulated. Meekness, gentleness, kindness, forbearance, long-suffering, patience, and pity are the great means for disarming prejudice, humbling pride, correcting error, and destroying stubborn contempt of holy things. Therefore those religious excitements, which have a prevailing temper of severity, and lack the essential kindness of Gospel graces, must be regarded as spurious.

Nor can we have a higher estimate of any attention to religion, in which ministers or churches run before the Spirit of God. Seldom do we hear patient waiting on God commended as a means of reviving religion, and yet the Scriptures teach that this is one state of heart necessary for a large and gracious communication of divine influences. Thus spoke Christ to his disciples: "Behold, I send the promise of the Father; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke xxiv., 49. In Acts ii., 1-4, we learn that they obeyed, con-

tinuing in prayer and supplication until the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the Holy Ghost given. A minister or a church reviving itself will be as unsuccessful as Samson without his hair, or as Israel when the Ark of God was gone.

It has been asserted by some that whenever the proper means are faithfully, judiciously, and diligently used, there will be a genuine revival of religion. In support of this statement many plausible things may be said, but still we may and must reject it. Did not the prophets, did not Christ, did not the apostles use the proper means judiciously, diligently, and faithfully, and did a revival invariably follow? What say the Scriptures? Isaiah says, "Who hath believeth our report?" Jeremiah says, "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" When Ezekiel thundered, the people cried, "Ah! Lord God, he speaketh in parables." We read that even Jesus did not many mighty works at one place, because of the unbelief of the people. Matt. xiii., 58. And no one is found of sufficient effrontery to assert that, under Christ's ministry, any such extensive outpouring of the Spirit of God occurred as to justify the remark that whenever he preached there was a revival; yet Jesus spoke as never man spoke. He, too, had the Spirit, not by measure. The Spirit of the Lord God was upon him, making him of quick understanding, in the fear of the Lord; a spirit of counsel and of might. Jesus fasted and prayed more than any of us could do, and he did all to the perfect acceptance of God. The history of the apostle Paul teaches a simple lesson. His success was very varied. Where the Lord had much people, he had great success. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed, says Luke.



Akin to the error just stated is that which asserts that ministers are responsible for their success, and that churches are responsible for the prosperity of religion in their vicinity. In support of this view very plausible statements may be made; but it yet remains to find one passage of sacred Scripture to support it. Such a principle of judgment would lead to the entire condemnation of all holy men who have ever lived, the Man without sin not excepted. Even under the ministry of Jesus, those that "received him were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John ii., 13. "Neither he that planteth is any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." 1 Cor. iii., 7. See also Ezek. ii., 1-7. The excellency of the power is always of God.

Suppose a pious, godly minister to be under the full impression that he is responsible for his success—what will be the effect on his mind but to unnerve, dishearten, yea, overwhelm him? He will flee from the ministry as from the pit. The effect of such belief on the people will invariably be a loss of confidence in the most valuable ministry, a loss of humility, and grievous excesses. They will blame their minister as the Israelites did Moses for all that goes wrong; and each will be grasping at the reins of church government, that he may set things right. If, therefore, under such impressions, a religious excitement shall occur, be not a whit surprised if, in the end, it be found wholly spurious.

Those excitements which covet opposition and betray sad disappointment if it is not provoked, are also of a very doubtful character. Opposition to the truth is commonly to be expected, and when it does come, he who is dismayed by it shows very little strength of gracious principle. Yet opposition is, in itself, exceedingly undesirable. The natural opposition of the unrenewed mind to the truth, without



needless provocation and uselessly offensive methods of presenting truth, will be as much as the best of men will feel able to dispose of. "Giving none offense that the ministry be not blamed," is a scriptural precept.

An anonymous writer thus gives his views on religious ultraism :

"Its *sources* are: 1. An ardent temperament. 2. Mistaken views of religion. 3. A restless desire of change. 4. The love of distinction. 5. The force of external circumstances. a.

"Its *elements* are: 1. Self-righteousness. 2. Censoriousness. 3. Disingenuousness. 4. Inconsistency. 5. Fanaticism.

"It *manifests* itself: 1. In respect to that which is *wrong*, by opposing it with an improper spirit. 2. In respect to that which is comparatively *indifferent*, by urging it beyond its real claims. 3. In respect to that which is *right*, by promoting it at the expense of integrity and charity.

"It has a *tendency*: 1. To throw open the flood-gates of error. 2. To drive many into the opposite extreme of inactivity and formality. 3. To weaken the moral energies of the Church. 4. To supply to the careless world an apology for the neglect of religion. 5. It tends to absolute infidelity.

"The remedies for it are: 1. Careful discrimination. 2. Moral courage. 3. Eminent piety."

Cold and heartless indifference never cures religious h. B. errors or follies.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### MEANS OF PROMOTING REVIVALS.

THERE are few things in which the honor of religion is more deeply involved than the means used for promoting an earnest and general attention to the great concerns of the soul. On this point almost every great awakening for the last hundred years affords a solemn and earnest warning. The commencement of genuine revivals of religion is commonly ushered in by means quite or nearly unexceptionable. But when some success has been had, there often comes a spirit of self-reliance, of vanity, or ostentation, and the beauty and purity of the work are marred by the introduction of doubtful expedients.

It is therefore important that we should settle beforehand our principles, determine what should not be done as well as what is proper, and never in the time of high excitement be led to do things which can not be approved by the soundest judgment and after the most solemn reflection. The following characteristics should mark the means to be used for promoting a revival of religion :

- ✓ 1. They should be scriptural. The Bible was written just as it is that the man of God might be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. He who would not be chargeable with folly must make the Bible the man of his counsel in all things relating to the spread of the Gospel. A human invention, confessed to be such, should always be shunned, whether it is an old or a new device. If God's Word gives no countenance to a measure, rest assured that it is worse than doubtful.

2. Let every means resorted to be marked with the frankness and simplicity of the Gospel. Avoid all trick and chicanery. Cunning is not wisdom. To be crafty is neither reputable nor useful. To be full of guile is no part of a great soul, no mark of a true Israelite. The human mind particularly revolts at duplicity and artifice in an ecclesiastic.

3. All means for promoting revivals should partake of the kindness of the Gospel. Fidelity is not inconsistent with much affection. The truth should be spoken in love. Bitter denunciation ill suits the herald of good news. The terrible rebuke was used by Christ almost if not quite exclusively against the gross and glaring hypocrites of his day. Besides, inspired men might, by divine direction, say things wholly unbecoming those who are not under infallible guidance. A system of means highly terrific is not evangelical.

4. All our efforts to promote revivals should partake of the sobriety and good order every where commended in the Gospel. Religion pure and undefiled is no less opposed to tumult, confusion, and extravagance than it is to coldness and heartless formality. The Scriptures are very clear on this point. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." 1 Cor. xiv., 33. The charge of madness, when ill-founded, is stale and harmless against religion; but when well-founded, it is subversive of any cause.

5. All approved means are not to be used at all times, but they should be used seasonably. Reproof to him who needs comfort will break the head. Encouragement to the self-confident will bring on them strong delusions. There is a time for every thing. A wise man regardeth both time and judgment. Eccl. viii., 5.

6. No means should be employed with the intent of pro-



voking opposition, and those which are used should be so managed as to give no needless offense. At the same time, we must not lull men into carnal security. Raving madness and cold indifference toward the truth are both great sins, and alike fatal to the success of the Gospel. The human mind is sufficiently inclined to hate the Gospel without needlessly arousing its enmity. And tamely to lull men into carnal security will bring upon us the curse of those who sew pillows for all arm-holes.

✓ 7. In the use of all means to promote revivals, we should not chiefly regard present results, but permanent effects. The addition of a hundred members to a church may next year lead to the ejection of the whole number thus added. No wise man will say that the cause of God is thus strengthened. In bodily health stimulants are often useful, but a needless stimulant is useless, and an overstimulant is injurious. Means which now multiply church-members, may in the end ruin a church. Let us take into view all the remote consequences of a measure before we pronounce it good.

8. We should always remember that it is human to err. We may as easily commit mistakes in the wrong use of lawful means as in resorting to foolish ones. Foolish men will act foolishly, whatever their theories may be. Rules are often good, and the application of them bad.

9. We should avoid all doubtful expedients. In this as in other matters, let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. We have no right to presume that God will make our carelessness productive of good to men. Those who adopt means of questionable propriety are commonly left to suffer shame.

10. He who expects so to use the means of reviving religion as never to awaken the contempt of the proud, the enmity of the malignant, or the reviling of opposers,

will never be the instrument of extended good in the Church of God. The print of our fingers is left on all we do. No work of man is perfect. Some spots may be found at times on the disk of the sun. He who is so fearful of doing wrong that he will do nothing, will live and die a cumberer of the ground. ✓

After these general remarks, it is proper to descend to particulars, and state precisely the means to be used for promoting revivals.

At the outset it may be stated that if we would enjoy extensive and powerful revivals of religion, we must put a ✓ high estimate on their value. The Holy Spirit is the sole author of genuine revivals. Would we secure his presence? Let us prize it above all earthly good. His love is better than wine. He is the true oil of gladness. Only when he, like the wind, blows on his garden, do the spices thereof flow out. Nothing that men can do is any substitute for his gracious presence. And no labors that man can perform, and no sufferings that he can endure, are a substitute for a high estimate of the importance and glory of the Spirit's presence. If you highly prize this blessing, you will be careful not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption;" and you will "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice," and you will "be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." It is when the Holy Ghost is lightly esteemed that he says, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early."

The great means of immediately calling the attention of men to the business of their own salvation, and thus of reviving religion, is the preaching of God's Word. Without ✓

here giving any extended remarks on preaching, it is well to say that the best preaching calls attention to *what* is said rather than to the *manner* of announcing it. It is important that a correct taste on this subject should prevail. The truth of God does its work not the less powerfully because it does its work silently. The doctrines to be preached should be those found in all the Scriptures, but great prominence should be given to those views which are emphatically called evangelical. Christ crucified, and the topics therewith closely connected, must form the burden of all useful preaching. God greatly honors those truths. We must never lose sight of the death of Christ, which is at once the foundation and the central truth of the Christian system. So Paul taught: "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." "When I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." When the Church was so revived in the days of the apostles, Luke tells us that the believers "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." Acts ii., 42.

As to the question, How long should preaching be continued at one time? Something must be left to the judgment of those present. On a few occasions the apostles preached all day, or all night. When a like occasion occurs, a like course may be pursued. Nor should preaching be so frequent as to exhaust the nervous system of those who are hearers, or to prevent a pretty full attendance; else it defeats its own object. The Presbyterian General Assembly of 1849 used this language: "We suggest whether the practice of assembling the people for several



consecutive days for prayer, and praise, and preaching might not be happily revived. In some places it has been continued, and with good effect; but in others, we fear, it has fallen into general disuse. Prudence should be exercised as to the time when and how long such meetings should be held. That they are not novelties is plain from the Directory for Worship, chapter viii., section 6." The Assembly might also have referred to the great preachings at Jerusalem in the days of the apostles, and to the remarkable revival under Ezra, in justification of the same thing.

In giving an account of the revival at Jerusalem about the time of Pentecost, Luke mentions that the brethren continued in "fellowship." That is, they banished strife, envy, variance, wrath, jealousy, and all bad passions, and cultivated kind, obliging, affectionate tempers and manners. Because the whole Church was bound up in one bundle of love, religion prospered. Jesus rides prosperously because of truth, and righteousness, and *meekness* in the earth. Without fervent love to God's people and ministers, Christianity has never had a rapid spread. Jesus said: "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Again: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." "When we see men apt to retain a sense of old differences, ready to receive impressions of new ones, incredulous of the sincerity of others, who profess a readiness for love and peace, apt to take every thing in the worst sense, morose and severe toward this or that sort of believers," we may safely infer that in their present tempers they will not be the instruments of any extended revival of pure religion. It would be well for all Christians to remember Leighton's saying: "Even sin may be sinfully reproved."

✓ The frequent and becoming celebration of the sacraments is a powerful means of reviving pure religion. Though baptism is to be administered but once, yet it should as often as possible be in public. When solemnly and duly administered, it is highly useful to believers. Witnessing this solemn service reminds them of their vows. It also frequently affects the careless. In the case of adults it is a solemn profession of personal piety, and hardly any thing is better suited to move unconverted men. The fact that three thousand souls in one day joined the Church in Jerusalem must have made a profound impression. See also Matt. xxi., 32. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance that may be "often" repeated by the same church. And whenever religion is in such a state as to secure much attention from a community, there is a desire for increased attendance at this solemn feast. A good writer says: "I do not see why an increase of love to Christ should not dispose Christians as much to increase in this as in other duties. It seems plain by the Scriptures that the primitive Christians were wont to celebrate the memorial of the sufferings of their dear Redeemer every Lord's day; and so I believe it will be again in the Church of Christ in days that are approaching." It is a serious question whether the Christian world is not sadly delinquent in having so few communions. And no good man will doubt that in attending on them our zeal and love ought to be doubled.

✓ Alms-giving is a great means of reviving religion. Speaking of the great revival in Jerusalem, Luke says: "All that believed were together and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted to all men, as every man had need." Christ said: "The poor ye have always with you, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good." Paul said: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to

receive." When the prayers of Cornelius were united with his alms, they came up for a memorial before God. The Gospel settles not the amount or the proportion we must give, but it says: "As ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." With superior privileges, Christians should have a higher standard of giving than prevailed under a darker dispensation. Yet to the Jewish Church God said: "Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." President Edwards says: "So far as I can judge by the Scriptures, there is no external duty whatsoever by which persons will be so much in the way not only of receiving temporal benefits, but also spiritual blessings, the influence of God's Holy Spirit in the heart, in divine discoveries, and spiritual consolation, as by abounding in deeds of charity or alms-giving." In support of this opinion he refers to Isa. lviii., 7, and onward; Psa. cxii., 4-9; Luke viii., 2, 3; and Matt. xxviii., 9. He adds: "Perhaps no remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God ever occurred and continued any long time but what was attended with an abounding in this duty." The pious Cotton Mather, even when a youth at college, was in the habit of giving the tenth of his pocket-money to religious purposes. Whitefield, Wesley, Francke, Zinzendorf, and many other eminent servants of Christ, have been more remarkable for nothing than for their liberality. The ancient promise was that under the Gospel "the vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful, but the liberal soul deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." Our efforts for the suffer-



ing at a distance may deceive us. We may flatter ourselves that we have pure benevolence when we shed tears over misery depicted in a book. But if we love not our brother, whom we have seen, and who is suffering at our door, how can we love our brother whom we have not seen?

A great means of reviving religion is found in liveliness, thankfulness, and praise to God for his mercies. If we had praised God more for mercies received, we should have received more mercies to praise God for. In heaven there is joy over *one*, even *one* sinner that repenteth. It should be so on earth. Even in the jail at Philippi, to prayer Paul and Silas added the singing of praises. It has long been observed that precious revivals are not only attended but also preceded by an increased disposition to make thankful mention of God's mercies. Thus the time that elapsed between the ascension of our Saviour and the day of Pentecost was in some respects a dark season. Yet blessings had been received, and greater ones were expected. In the first chapter of Acts, Luke tells us that during this time "all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." But in his Gospel Luke says: "They were continually in the temple praising and blessing God." There is no contrariety between these statements, because there is no contrariety between prayer and praise. So also when the glorious revival commenced in Jerusalem, and many thousands were converted to God, "they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people, and the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

But we must not omit prayer. It is wonderfully efficacious in promoting God's work. Thus the early Christians

“continued steadfastly in prayers.” Acts ii., 42. On this duty the Scriptures are full. “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee; and thou shalt glorify me.” “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” As in the days of Elijah and of James, so now, “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” “If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” Here is promised the specific blessing we need—the author of all true revivals—the Holy Ghost. “Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” Edwards says: “There is no way that Christians in a private capacity can do as much to promote the work of God and advance the kingdom of Christ as by prayer. By this even women, and children, and servants may have a public influence. A poor man in his cottage may thus have an influence all over the world.” In answer to the prayers of the humble, God can revive his cause, give penitence to the hardened, and wondrously display his glory, when all that remained seemed ready to die. A B

To prayer it is often proper to add fasting. When the Lord Jesus was upon earth, he said that when he should be taken away his disciples should fast. In every age pious men have united fasting and prayer in times of distress, even when speedy deliverance was expected. Thus did Daniel when he saw the prophecies about to be fulfilled in the subversion of the Chaldean monarchy, and in the deliverance of Israel from long captivity. So did Ezra and all the Jews at the River Ahava, on their return from Babylon, and just before the great revival of God’s work among them. Like prayer, fasting has been a part of every



system of religion known among men. Some, indeed, even in Christian countries, have carried it to the length of superstition, and have thereby impaired their health. Others, who pretend to fast, only exchange one kind of sumptuous eating for another, and thus mock God. All such practices are censurable. The nature of an acceptable fast, and the blessings attending it, are clearly stated in the Scriptures, especially in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah.

Another important means of reviving religion is Christian discipline. Let all the breaches of charity between brethren be healed. Let backsliders be reclaimed. Let dead branches be cut off. Let preventive measures be adopted against the inroads of error in faith or practice. Let that animating discipline, which unites all the members of a church as one man against every form of sin, be steadily maintained. Let every man help on his brother in his pious pilgrimage. The leading members of a church should encourage others less advanced.

Another happy means of reviving religion is pious conversation among the godly. Is there not commonly a sad defect in this particular, especially in the matter of personal religion? An ostentatious display of personal feelings is always odious; in a professor of religion it is abominable. But proper conversation is as opposite to vain glory as to formality. Many of the Psalms, and several of Paul's addresses and portions of his writings, are declarations of personal religious experience. He who would condemn a modest recital of the dealings of God with one's soul would condemn many of the most precious writings extant, inspired and uninspired. But religious conversation need not be confined to experimental religion. It may extend over every theme of revelation, over every glorious prospect of the Church of God and of every saint. That God is well pleased with pious conversation even in the darkest



times is clear from Malachi (iii., 16, 17). That prophet lived in times of dreadful wickedness and apostasy. Yet even then "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

There is great need for a vast increase of zeal in our day. The walls of Jerusalem went up because "the people had a mind to build." When God's people serve him with increased alacrity, they are already revived. Nor should zeal stop at easy tasks, but, when called thereto, undertake the most difficult labors. Brooks says: "I have never found greater and choicer blessings to attend any of my poor weak labors than those that have been brought forth into the world through the greatest difficulties." We must learn to rejoice in the duties of self-denial. We must hold on our way "with all perseverance." If tempted to desist, let us say as Nehemiah (chap. vi., 3): "I am doing a great work, so that I can not come down. Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?"

To all this let us add a holy life. "Ye are the light of the world." Beware, ye people of God, how and whither ye walk lest ye ruin many others. Be stirred up to a pious walk, that others may glorify God through your example. The importance of a holy life in carrying on God's work in the world is beautifully urged in Psa. lxxxi., 13-16.

Finally, let all practice a patient waiting for the Lord. Hardly any thing is more insisted on in Scripture as requisite to a right state of mind and heart. Yet some, who give great prominence to other duties of religion, seldom speak of this. But God's Word, and not the example of

even good men, must be our rule of faith and life. The Psalmist says: "I wait for the Lord; my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning." "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us." A tumultuous or imperious state of mind in us can not be pleasing to God. A wise parent gives nothing to a child in a turbulent state of mind, however loud and earnest his calls. Neither will our heavenly Father hear our cries, unless our spirits be subdued and submissive. One says: "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." In this frame of mind let the whole Church be found, and her blessings will be sure.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### PASTORAL VISITING.

IN his address to the elders of the Church at Ephesus, Paul says, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house"—*καὶ κατ' οἴκους*. Here we see what the Apostle did in the fulfillment of his ministry, and how he did it. Especially have we his example for bringing the truth before the minds of popular assemblies, and also for teaching the people by more private efforts in their own dwellings. Were men already properly awakened, and instructed on the subject of religion, it might be less necessary to seek them out in private; but even then they might be detained at home by sickness or old age, or some infirmity, and thus require the consolations of the Gospel to be brought to them.

In performing pastoral visitation, it is not often necessary to make any one visit long. If a visit is simply to one person, it may often gain the whole object in five or ten minutes. This is true not only in case of the sick, who can not bear long visits, but also in the case of the healthy. A tract or book may be given with a few words of counsel, warning, or encouragement, and longer remaining with the party could do no good. Even where families are to be visited, an hour's time is not always necessary, nor the half of it. The object of a visit by a pastor is various. Sometimes it is to make the acquaintance of a family. Then, if they desire it, it may be longer than for other purposes. Sometimes they are in deep affliction, which demands time for



hearing the matter, and giving wholesome advice. Commonly a minister's visits relate to the souls of his people, and a short visit will often be found more impressive and profitable than a long one.

Ministers greatly err when they give to this duty so much time as to slight their preparation for the pulpit. If people can not have many visits and good sermons also, let them lack the visits.

Visit the people as much as you may, and you will still find some complaining that you visit them no more. In some cases this is an awkward way of assuring you of a welcome. In others it is the fruit of a fault-finding spirit. In either case it is not well to be fretted at it. Do your duty and please God. An aged servant of Christ said he never knew but one minister to visit as much as his people desired, and he was held in general contempt.

Some classes of people have peculiar claims on ministers for visits. Among these the sick hold a prominent place. But this subject demands a separate consideration. Next come the aged. They should be sought out and treated with great respect and kindness. It is due to their age. "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head." It is specially due to them when they are the servants of Christ. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." Many an aged pilgrim is revived by a short and judicious visit from a pastor. One of the greatest sorrows of old age flows from neglect. To be buried in forgetfulness, before they enter the grave, is enough to make them sad. Their hints to young ministers are well worth attention. Their prayers for them often bring them support and success which they looked not for.

The sorrows of the aged are many. They are well set forth by Solomon in Eccl. xii., 1-5. To them the days have come, when each one of them says: "I have no pleas-

ure in them." To them "the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars are darkened, and the clouds return after the rain." The day has come "when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows are darkened, and the doors are shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and they rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music are brought low; and they are afraid of that which is high, and fears are in the way, and the almond-tree flourishes, and the grasshopper is a burden, and desire fails." Surely such require great tenderness from all around them. President Edwards well "*Resolved*—Never to allow the least measure of any fretting or uneasiness at my father or mother, and to suffer no effects of it, so much as in the least alteration of my speech or motion of my eye." His rule was not too rigid.

One of the most pleasing ways of employing our time with the pious aged is to hear their account of the work of God in former times in their own souls, or in the souls of others. ✓ Whitefield's converts seldom, if ever, forgot his person, his manner, or his spirit. His name would arouse them when nothing else would.

The aged pious are often greatly delighted with accounts of the progress of the Gospel in different parts of the world. Pains should be taken to keep them informed on this subject.

As pious men grow old, they often show an eager disposition to study the unfulfilled prophecies. They have read, seen, and heard of the past. They expect soon to leave the world. They feel a natural desire to know what is to be hereafter. This desire should or may be so far encouraged as to put into their hands some sober work on the subject, such as Dr. Thomas Scott on Daniel and Revelation. But

it is painful to see the aged imagining that they can almost foretell the history of the world. Wild and fanciful writings on prophecy are highly dangerous to any. It would be well for all to remember the remark of Bishop Newton, that "by giving us prophecies, God did not intend to make prophets of us."

Pastors should endeavor to find out the early history of the old people in their charge, and so introduce topics which refresh them. In so doing they would often be themselves much edified. Some years ago a pastor publicly testified: "The most impressive comments upon divine truth I have ever heard, have been those uttered by aged saints upon passages of Scripture repeated for their especial comfort."

It is a great error in pastors to neglect aged persons who are not professors of religion. It is not true that they are all so hardened as to preclude the hope of their conversion. In the life of Haldane, p. 158, is an account of the conversion of a man ninety-two years old. Many old men have turned to the Lord. Read the history of Manasseh.

The young are also to be specially attended to in pastoral visits. These are the hope of the Church and of the country. They will soon fill the places of those who now are over them in Church and State. We can undertake no more weighty task than to mould their hearts and manners to virtue and to honor. No wise or good man can be indifferent to such a subject. An error in our treatment of the young will have a powerful effect on many for a long time to come. The young are easily impressed. As a class they will outlive all others on earth. And there are many of them. The precise number of persons under twenty years of age in this country exceeds the common estimates—almost exceeds belief. In pastoral visits to the young, your first duty to them is to love them fervently. There is no



substitute for this. None detect insincerity sooner than they, and none are more offended by an attempt to deceive on this point. Your next duty is to let them see and make them feel that you love them, wish them well, feel an interest in their welfare, and sympathize with them in all their lawful joys and solitudes. You must attach them to you. By some fair and honorable means you must win their love and confidence.

Then you must teach them, if they are ignorant, and with all patience labor to impress divine truth on their hearts. Having fairly won their confidence, use your influence to lead them to Christ.

In this work begin early.

Be faithful in catechising the young, and encourage parents to do the same. Dr. Watts well says that, "Among the various forms and methods wherein the prime articles of our religion have been put together in a comprehensive scheme for the use of the unlearned, there is none so proper for children as that of catechisms. The way of instruction by question and answer seems to be the plainest and easiest manner wherein the knowledge of religion can be conveyed to the minds of those that are ignorant, and especially of the younger parts of mankind. This will appear in several respects.

"1. Hereby the principles of Christianity are reduced into short sentences, which are much more easy to be understood by children, as well as to be treasured up in their memories.

"2. Hereby these divine principles are not only thrown into a just and easy method, but every part of them is naturally introduced by a proper question; and the rehearsal of the answer (which should seldom exceed three or four lines) is made far easier to a child than it would be if the child were required to repeat the whole scheme

of religion by heart, without the interposition of another speaker.

“3. This way of teaching has something familiar and delightful in it, because it looks more like conversation and dialogue. It keeps the attention fixed with pleasure on the sacred subject, and yet continually relieves the attention by the alternate returns of the question and the answer.

“4. The very curiosity of the young mind is awakened by the question to know what the answer will be; and the child will take pleasure in learning the answer by heart, to improve its own knowledge and to be able to answer such a question. And thus the principles of religion will gradually slide into the mind, and the whole scheme of it be learned without fatigue and tiresomeness.

“I might have enlarged greatly upon each of these advantages, which the catechetical method has for the instruction of children above and beyond all other. I profess myself, therefore, a constant friend to catechisms for the instruction of the ignorant.”

Attention to this duty in the family will always be found useful.

But look out for difficulties in the work of pastoral visiting. Every zealous young minister in a country charge can tell somewhat such a tale as that told so pleasantly by Dr. A. Alexander. He says there “was a desire expressed by many (at Briery) that they might have pastoral visits, and an opportunity of knowing their minister. I determined to begin a regular course of this kind. I accordingly went to Colonel Charles Allen, the elder, who lived farther east, and gained his consent to go with me through that section of the congregation, beginning with old Mr. Reed’s, on Bush River, as the remotest house. We arrived pretty early in the day. The old gentleman was out on a distant part of his estate, where the hands were clearing

ground, but was sent for by his wife. Although we told her we came not to dine, she gave no heed, but set all in motion around her to prepare viands. The chickens were chased in all directions, fires were kindled, closets were searched, and I soon found that we should scarcely be able to get away. After some time, the old gentleman came in; but before he can be seen he must shave his beard and put on some clean clothes. We now repeated our wish to see the family collected; but the mistress and her maids were now in the act of preparing a fat turkey for the spit. For hours we had none to converse with but the master of the house, and conversation with this old tobacco planter was not easy. He seemed like one sitting on nettles. I informed him of the object of our visit. 'Very good. Very glad to see the parson. Live so far from church that I can seldom get there.' At length he thought he would use his privilege of asking a question. And that which he propounded was about the meaning of that passage where it is said that seven women should take hold of one man. I was obliged to tell him that I did not know, intimating that the knowledge of this was not essential to salvation. 'Very true,' said he; 'but I have thought that it might refer to our times, when so many men have been killed in the French Revolution, and in the consequent wars.' Late in the day the table was spread with an enormous dinner. By the time this was concluded a thunder-storm burst over us, and detained us until near sunset.

"Thus a whole day was wasted in visiting one family, and that without the least benefit. I found that among a people so widely scattered, and unaccustomed to such a thing, no progress could be made in this way. I adopted ✓ the method of preaching in different parts of the bounds, in private houses. But here a mischievous custom existed.



After worship was over, as many as thirty persons would sometimes stay to dine. This was by invitation of the family, and to some must have been a heavy tax. But the old Virginians never count the cost for dinners, even when they give very little for the support of the Gospel."

Another class of persons to be sought out in pastoral visits consists of the domestics. In all Christian countries, some of the most lovely specimens of piety are in this class.

There are in many families middle-aged or elderly persons, who live in a state of more or less dependence. They are perhaps intelligent, and have seen better days. They are probably timid and highly sensitive. But numbers of them have good minds, and would be most grateful for a little notice. Try to do them good.

There remain to be considered the husband and wife, or the father and mother of a family. These should always be approached with respect. We should honor them before their families. It is their due. Yet we should be faithful to them. Constantly try to win them to Christ, or, if already converted, urge them on to higher attainments.

No rule can be given binding in all cases respecting the frequency of pastoral visits. Some pastors attempt to visit all their people once a year, and others twice. Some have less method, and yet do their work well. In rural districts a neighborhood prayer-meeting or lecture may bring several families together, and, when rightly managed, may have all the good effect of a visit to each family.

On nothing have faithful pastors been more united than on the value of pastoral visiting. Dr. Watts says: "He that has the happy talent of parlor preaching, has sometimes done more for Christ and souls in the space of a few minutes, than by the labor of many hours and days in the usual course of preaching in the pulpit."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### VISITING THE SICK.

ONE of the most solemn, delicate, and difficult duties of ministers of the Gospel is visiting the sick. Nor are the explicit teachings of Scripture very full on this matter. The only passage commonly quoted on this subject is in James v., 14-17. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." So far as this passage relates to the business in hand, it is proper to observe three things for clearing our views of it.

1. It lends no countenance to the custom of extreme unction in vogue among Romanists, and by them exalted to the rank of a sacrament. Whatever they make of it, it clearly has nothing to do with their custom. For they anoint only *in extremis*, and when they suppose the anointed will not recover. The Council of Trent declared "that this unction is to be applied to the sick, and especially to those who lie in so dangerous a state as in all appearance to be appointed to death, whence it is called 'the sacrament of the dying.'" Now the Apostle states expressly that in the anointing he mentions the sick shall be raised up. So that the matter differs as widely from primitive example as life differs from death. But Rome is very

earnest on the subject, and in the Douay version pleads for this her last chance to make a dollar out of her victims. That reads, "Is any man sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church," etc. In a note it says: "See here a plain warrant of Scripture for the sacrament of extreme unction, that any controversy against its institution would be against the express words of the sacred text in the plainest terms;" and the Council of Trent adopted these four canons:

"1. Whoever shall affirm that extreme unction is not truly and properly a sacrament, instituted by Christ our Lord, and published by the blessed apostle James, but only a ceremony received from the fathers, or a human invention: let him be accursed.

"2. Whoever shall affirm that the sacred unction of the sick does not confer grace, nor forgive sin, nor relieve the sick; but that its power has ceased, as if the gift of healing existed only in past ages: let him be accursed.

"3. Whoever shall affirm that the rite and practice of extreme unction observed by the Holy Roman Church is repugnant to the doctrine of the blessed apostle James, and therefore that it may be altered or despised without sin: let him be accursed.

"4. Whoever shall affirm that the 'elders of the Church,' whom blessed James exhorts to be brought in to anoint the sick man, are not priests ordained by the bishop, but persons advanced in years in any community; and therefore that the priest is not the only proper minister of extreme unction: let him be accursed."

That this whole view is a figment, a perversion, is plain from the very words of James: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Adam Clarke justly says: "St. James orders the sick person to be *anointed* in reference to *his cure*; but the Romish priests



anoint the sick in the *agonies of death*, when there is *no prospect of his recovery*; and never administer that sacrament, as it is called, while there is *any hope of life*. St. James orders this anointing for the cure of the *body*; but they apply it for the cure of the *soul*; in reference to which use of it, St. James gives no directions." Dr. Doddridge, speaking of what James here directs, says: "How vastly different this is from the *extreme unction* practiced by the Papists, not for *cure*, but only when life is *despaired of*, I think every reasonable man may easily judge." Dr. Scott says: "It need scarcely be observed that the *extreme unction* used by the Church of Rome is totally different from the anointing recommended by St. James; for that is never administered till the sick person is supposed to be at the point of death, and no hope is entertained of his recovery; so that a spiritual benefit alone can be proposed by the ceremony, which, on the contrary, serves merely as an opiate, to quiet and stupefy the consciences both of the dying and of the living."

2. *Auricular confession to a priest* derives no countenance from this passage. The Church of Rome is very anxious to give this turn to the passage, and therefore, on the words found in the Douay Bible, "Confess your sins one to another," has put this note: "That is, to the priests of the Church, whom (ver. 14) he had ordered to be called for, and brought in to the sick: moreover, to confess to persons who had no power to forgive sins would be useless. Hence the precept here means, that we must confess to men whom God hath appointed, and who, by their ordination and jurisdiction, have received the power of remitting sins in his name." If such glosses on the Scripture may be allowed, then we may prove any thing by the Bible. The perversion is gross. Our translation is, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another."

The Douay version reads: "Confess, therefore, your sins one to another, and pray for one another." The Vulgate reads: "Confitemini ergo alterutrum peccata vestra et orate pro invicem." The Greek is no less clear: "Εξομολογεῖσθε ἀλλήλοις τὰ παραπτώματα, καὶ εὐχέσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων." If the text can clearly and beyond all dispute settle the sense of a passage to an honest mind, this does it, and that in two ways:

a. It declares that the confession is to be mutual. Confess *one to another*—the duty, whatever it is, is to be done reciprocally. Now if the priest confessed to the people in the same way that he calls upon the people to confess to him, there would be some show of authority here for that. But he has as little idea of confessing to the people as he has of any thing else. He says it is "useless" to confess to them.

b. The same persons are to pray for each other. "Confess your faults to one another, and pray for one another." Praying and confessing go together. One is not to do all the confessing, and another all the praying. But whoever does one is to do the other. In this view candid men must agree. Doddridge says: "The confession *here* mentioned is plainly spoken of as *mutual*." Adam Clarke says: "It is not said, *confess your faults to the elders, that they may forgive them*, or prescribe penance, in order to forgive them. No; the members of the Church were to *confess their faults to each other*; therefore *auricular confession* to a priest, such as is prescribed by the Romish Church, has no foundation in this passage. Indeed, had it any foundation here, it would prove more than they wish; for it would require the *priest* to *confess his sins* to the people, as well as the people to confess their sins to the priest."

3. A third point relating to this passage respects the nature of the cure wrought. The common opinion is that

it was miraculous. Adam Clarke denies that there was "any kind of miracle," and argues thus: "If a *miracle* was intended, it could have been as well wrought *without the oil* as *with it*. It is not intimated that even this unction is to save the sick man, but the prayer of faith." Verse 15. "What was here recommended, was to be done as a natural means of restoring health; which, while they used prayer and supplication, they were not to neglect." He then argues at length upon the sanative qualities of pure olive-oil in Judea, in Egypt, etc. But there are great difficulties attending this view.

*a.* It seems to have occurred to few, if any, but its learned author.

*b.* If oil was merely used as a medicine, it might properly be administered by any one—a nurse, a friend, a physician. But the text shows it was to be administered by the elders of the church.

*c.* It was to be done in a religious way. "Let them pray for him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

*d.* In Mark vi., 13, we read: "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." Dr. Clarke himself admits that the cures here wrought were miraculous.

*e.* Although the Church of Rome makes great pretensions to miraculous powers, yet she has not even a decent claim to them, and all others admit that such powers are no longer in exercise. With them properly ceased the custom of anointing the sick. Having thus cleared the passage of difficulties, the way is open to consider the duty we owe to the sick of our times.

In considering this matter in order, the following remarks seem called for:

I. Religion is a proper topic, and ministers are proper persons to be introduced into the chambers of the sick. ✓



Some physicians, who are wicked men, often make great opposition. Ungodly relations often do the same. It is marvelous to what lengths some go in this hostility. The reasons commonly assigned are that the introduction of such a subject will produce agitation that will be injurious to the sanative action of remedies. But the real ground of opposition is commonly a deadly enmity against evangelical piety. If the physician *forbids* the visits of clergymen, he goes beyond his duty, and should be so told. He has no more right to exclude a pastor, than the pastor has to exclude him. In this day very few of the faculty make any open opposition. But unconverted friends often select such a time to display their opposition to piety. These must be dealt with according to their respective characters, and according to the rules of prudence, just as if they were attempting to hinder access to their friends who are in health. If the head of the family denies admission to a minister, the only way is to submit. A great wrong is done, but it is done by the husband or father, and not by the minister who offers to visit the sick. That ministers should be prudent in their visits, that they should not be noisy and agitate weak nerves, that they should not weary the sick with tedious visits, but be short, and that they should be cheerful, and not create gloom by their presence, all this may be conceded, and should be insisted upon. But that religious topics and teachers should be excluded from the sick and dying is monstrous, provided they desire it or assent to it. Multitudes of physicians of great eminence have testified to the value of good spiritual advice given to their patients. Dr. Rush always encouraged the visits of pious, prudent ministers to the sick under his care.

II. The sick should therefore call for the elders of the Church—they should send for their pastors. Many rely on

their pastor hearing of their sickness by rumor, and unreasonably blame him if he does not come to see them. They think he ought to notice their absence from church, and thus find out the facts. But this is quite unreasonable. A minister in the pulpit has something else to do than to note absentees in his visiting-book. Let them send for him.

III. But let him go where he hears of sickness among his people, whether they send for him or not. He should not wait to be formally invited. Some will not send for him because they know not how sick they are; others are very modest and retiring, and do not wish to make an ado over themselves; others think their minister very busy, and do not wish to add to his duties; and, besides, they hope soon to be well, or they think there is time enough yet. It would be well if all members of the church and congregation would give information to the pastor when they hear of sickness near them. It would enable him to call before sent for, and this often gives him a great advantage, especially with the sensitive and suspicious.

IV. While a minister of the Gospel ought not to interfere with the medical treatment of his parishioners, yet he may publicly discourage the use of opiates to the dying. In some places this is becoming a serious evil. Not a few Christian people have their reason well-nigh destroyed before death by powerful narcotic drugs. Every right-minded man must approve the wish of Summerfield that he might enter eternity with an unclouded mind. He refused all drugs of a stupefying tendency when he was near death. So have many others. So did Jesus on the cross.

V. A minister should announce to his people that he will with promptness at all hours obey a summons to the sick-room. He ought not to be unwilling to rise at midnight and repair to the chamber where sickness and death are at work.

In the sick-room will be found every variety of character, and he who would do his whole duty must act with judgment and discrimination. Some writer says that "in visiting the sick, three things should be steadily kept in view: the influence of what may be said upon the person, if dying; the influence it may have on him, should he recover; and the influence it may have on persons in health about him." Orton says that where the sick are "evidently pious, or evidently vicious, there is no difficulty; but where persons are sober and honest, yet seem to have little or nothing of the life of religion, there is the greatest difficulty not to excite false hopes or groundless fears. . . . The persons that are present generally render this work still more difficult."

Among the classes of persons found in the sick-room will be these:

1. Those who have burdened consciences. Some will be overwhelmed with a general sense of sin. Others will show great troubles on account of particular sins, sometimes such as were in violation of law. If such a fact should be made known to a minister in a confidential manner, he is bound to regard the confidence as sacred, unless he distinctly refused so to receive it beforehand, unless his concealment would in some way make him an accessory after the fact, or unless his concealment would work some wrong to some one living or dead. If the matter is one that admits of restitution and requires it, let him advise that to be made.

2. It is not unfrequently the case that skepticism is found lingering about the minds of the impenitent sick. These cases are very trying. Time is short, and they are encompassed with a world of difficulty. One of the best means of relief to such is reading the Scriptures, especially the Gospels. The Gospel is its own witness.



3. Be not misled in your view of the state of the sick by a declaration that they are willing to die. This of itself is no evidence of preparation for death. All suicides are willing to die—had rather die than live—else they would not commit self-murder. Although it is commonly said that death is an honest hour, yet this is true only comparatively. Many dying people deceive themselves, and some attempt to deceive others, when eternity would, we should suppose, greatly move them. One who had great experience left this as his view: “The more I see of the world, the more I am convinced that no just idea can be formed of persons’ characters or future state merely from the manner of their death.” Every intelligent and pious minister and physician will say the same.

4. Sometimes scoffers themselves will in sickness permit clergymen to visit them. This they do sometimes to oblige friends, sometimes to show their horrid bravery in the prospect of death, and sometimes in the belief that they will soon recover, and will be able to laugh at all these things with more boldness, if in that hour they can make a jest of them. The rule in such cases is to be civil and kind, but to observe a profound silence on the subject of religion. Prov. ix., 7, 8; Matt. vii., 8.

5. There are cases of apparently deep and honest conviction for sin. Some, perhaps many of those that appear so well, are not genuine. But it would be monstrous to say that there was no case of genuine repentance even on a death-bed. Doubtless it is true that men commonly die as they live; but divine grace sometimes reaches far, as in the case of the penitent thief on the cross. A due consideration of Matt. xx., 1–16; Luke iv., 25–29; and Rom. ix., 11–23, will abundantly show both the sovereignty and the fullness of divine grace.

6. Often you will be called to visit the pious sick. This

is a great privilege, well suited to strengthen the faith of God's people. Where the character is good and the heart seems to rest on the Saviour, be careful to comfort those whom God comforts. Give them all the consolations God has provided for such.

The case of Christians who have at least in heart backslidden and need restoration is often very difficult and painful. But let a course of perfect kindness and candor be pursued. Hold back nothing that may be profitable.

7. We should so order our conversation and prayers as to be serviceable, if possible, to others besides the sick. We can often say a word that may do good to the well. It not unfrequently happens that some are present who have been sick and have recovered, but have forgotten their vows.

The following is a sample of what is often occurring in the world. "A minister called to see a sick young lady, whom we will call Chloe. He engaged in prayer. During the season of prayer she made very little interruption, either by groans, sighs, or struggles. But as soon as the prayer was ended, she recommenced the same affecting and heart-rending outcries as before: '*Oh, I am dying unprepared; do pray for me again. I am going to hell! Oh, I am going to hell; do pray for me again!*' My impression was that she needed instruction as well as prayer. I therefore presented to her consideration the Lord Jesus as her only helper, and directed her in what manner to look to him and seek his salvation in this case of awful emergency. After listening to the Gospel offers of salvation a few moments, she turned to her mother, who sat on the other side of the bed in constant attendance on her daughter. '*Oh, mother (said she), I am dying. Do pray for your dying child. I never heard you pray in my life. Mother, I am going to hell. Do pray for my poor soul.*' Oh, how was my heart affected with this appeal to

a mother! The whole company, apparently, were melted into a burst of feeling, which was manifested by sobbings and overflowing tears. These were moments of deep impression. Death had fixed his relentless grasp on the trembling victim. Before us lay the struggling, agonizing, dying Chloe, inwardly burning to death with the raging fires of inflammation; her mind excited to the highest degree of anxiety in view of the terror of approaching death; while she felt the horrible consciousness of being unprepared for the solemn exchange of worlds. The minister had prayed, but no relief was found. The mother had been entreated to pray; but overflowing tears from a soul full of distress and terror comprised all the assistance she could afford a child sinking in despair. The attendants were weeping, but none of them could help the dying Chloe. And what was very remarkable, she made no attempts to pray for herself, while her cries for prayer to save her from hell were almost incessant. Under such circumstances, I addressed a few words to her in substance as follows: 'Chloe, evidently you have but a short time to live, and it is a matter of the utmost importance that you should be prepared to die. Doubtless it is the anxious desire and prayer of all present, who know how to pray, that God would have mercy on your soul, prepare you for death, save you from hell, and fit you for heaven. But there is something which God requires *you* to do. The Lord Jesus Christ has died on the cross of Calvary to atone for sin, that guilty sinners through faith in his name might be saved from destruction. God requires you now *to believe this truth*, and accept of the righteousness of his atoning blood as your covering from the guilt of sin. You are convinced that you are a sinner; you fear the wrath of God, and are afraid to die. The Lord Jesus, your only helper, your only Saviour, has opened the door of mercy, and invites you



now, on your dying-bed, to look to him for salvation. He requires you to repent of your sins, to believe in his name, and seek his pardoning mercy. Submit, yield up your heart, and resign yourself now into his hands, and Christ is able and ready to pardon your sins and save your soul from death.' During these remarks, she listened like one astonished. But here I observed a material change in her appearance. She stretched herself in her bed, fixed her eyes on the wall above, and trembled. Still her rational faculties were apparent.

"Believing that Death was about to cut short his work, I proposed to her the following question: 'Chloe, will you now accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your only Saviour from sin and hell, and submit your soul into his hands for salvation?' With a faltering voice she answered, '*No, I can not!*' Astonished at the answer, I rejoined once more by inquiry, 'Why, Chloe, why are you not willing, and why *can* you not now, with dying breath accept of Christ for salvation?' With evident appearance of being in full possession of her rational powers, with a still more feeble and tremulous articulation, looking me full in the face, she answered, 'IT IS TOO LATE!'

✓ "These were her last and dying words. Not another word was spoken to her, nor another syllable did she attempt to utter. She shuddered, groaned, gasped, ceased to breathe, and the immortal spirit took its flight in less than two hours after I first entered the room. I closed her eyes in death, amid the outcries of almost frantic relatives, and the sobbings of a deeply affected circle of attendants. Thus died the once gay, but now despairing Chloe."

As to the confession of sin called for by James, it is an important duty. Doddridge paraphrases the passage thus: "When you are conscious of having been really to blame, do not perversely vindicate a conduct which your own

hearts condemn, but be frank in acknowledging it. *Confess your faults one to another*; for we are all too ready to stumble in the way of our duty." This confession is sometimes for the sake of gaining advice, and sometimes for the purpose of making restitution, and sometimes for the purpose of extolling the sovereign grace of God manifested in our salvation. Dr. Scott says that the confession here enjoined "may mean, either mutual acknowledgment of the faults into which they had fallen in their conduct toward one another, which would tend greatly to peace and brotherly love, if duly practiced; or a communication, reciprocally, of their conflicts, and experience, and failures, with a candid confession of those things which burdened their consciences. This, when prudently managed, would ✓ make way for them to counsel, encourage, and exhort one another, and be a direction to their prayers for each other; thus promoting their inward peace, and the healing of their souls as well as the removal of the chastisements which they had incurred."

For still further details on the subject of visiting the sick, see Cecil's Remains, where some capital suggestions are given.

The general duties of a minister in a sick-room are conversation, reading the Scriptures, singing, and prayer. Prayer is always proper. It is specially directed by the apostle. Reading the Scriptures is often proper. But a nurse or a judicious friend can often do this better than a minister, especially where much needs to be read. This is often the case, the sick being ignorant of revealed truth. Singing is often a great comfort to the pious sick. It should be conducted in a gentle way, so as not to produce undue animal excitement. Conversation must be regulated according to the bodily strength of the party; but is of great importance where the sick one is not of unques-

tioned piety. It should be as little formal as possible, in short sentences and plain words, marked by great tenderness and solemnity. Let no religious services in the sick-room be noisy or tedious.

Those who visit the sick should pay special attention to the neatness of their persons, and be careful to have in their breath or in their clothing no bad odors.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### CARE OF THE POOR.

WHEN our Lord was on earth, he said: "Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good." We may expect to see some poor, as long as any of us lives. The New Testament makes it clear that the early Christians, especially at Jerusalem, were often poor. Collections were taken for their relief. The rich members sold their property and gave to them that needed. Indeed, owing to great distress for a time, a community of goods was established, not by any command of the apostles (Acts v., 4); but such was the power of love to the brethren that men volunteered to do so, for "all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Acts ii., 44, 45. "And great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." Acts iv., 33-35. It was not for declining to come into this plan, but for lying unto God, the Holy Ghost, that Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead.

To have a hard, unfeeling heart toward the poor is everywhere in Scripture spoken of in terms of strong disapprobation. To Jerusalem God said: "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness, neither did she strengthen the hand

of the poor and needy." Ezek. xvi., 49. On the other hand: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." Psa. xli., 1-3.

Agur the son of Jakeh showed great wisdom when he feared great wealth or abject want, and prayed: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." Prov. xxx., 8, 9. The hunger, and thirst, and cold, and nakedness, and all the ravenous gang of haggard evils which accompany want are terrific. All wise men are afraid to encounter them. Poverty may be no crime, but <sup>✓</sup> it is often a punishment for our vices, and it is always a <sup>?</sup> great misery. Charles Lamb has well described the abode of the very poor man: "That face, ground by want, in which every cheerful, every conversable lineament has been long effaced by misery—is that a face to stay at home with? Is it more a woman or a wild cat? What comforts can it share? What burdens can it lighten? Oh, 'tis a fine thing to talk of the humble meal shared together! But what if there be no bread in the cupboard? The innocent prattle of a man's children takes out the sting of a man's poverty. But the children of the very poor do not prattle. It is none of the least frightful features in that condition that there is no childishness in its dwellings. Poor people, said a sensible nurse to us once, do not bring up their children—they drag them up. The little careless darling of the wealthier nursery, in their hovel is transformed betimes into a premature-reflecting person.

No one has time to dandle it; no one thinks worth while to coax it, to soothe it, to toss it up and down, to humor it. There is none to kiss away its tears. If it cries, it can only be beaten. It has been prettily said that a babe is fed with milk and praise. But the aliment of this poor babe was thin, unnourishing; the return to its little baby tricks and efforts to engage attention, bitter, ceaseless objurgation. It never had a toy, or knew what a coral meant. It grew up without the lullaby of nurses; it was a stranger to the patient fondle, the hushing caress, the attracting novelty, the costlier plaything, or the cheaper off-hand contrivance to divert the child; the prattling nonsense—best sense to it—the wise impertinences, the apt story interposed that puts a stop to present sufferings, and awakens the passions of young wonder. It was never sung to—no one ever told it a tale of the nursery. It was dragged up to live or to die, as it happened. It had no young dreams. It broke at once into the iron realities of life. It is never its parent's mirth, his diversion, his solace; it never makes him young again with recalling his young times. The child of the very poor has no young times. It has come to be a man or woman before it was a child. It has learned to go to market; it chaffers, it haggles, it envies, it murmurs; it is knowing, acute, sharpened; it never prattles. Had we not reason to say that the home of the very poor man is no home?"

A great problem in every age has been, What is to be done for the poor? Political economy and Christian philanthropy have long labored at it, and often given very different answers. As we are not now discussing mere theories, but practical measures, it is not necessary to spend time in considering the views of different writers, who have speculated on the subject. The following observations probably embrace most of the points which demand



special attention. Great tenderness should be shown to the feelings of the poor. This is very different from the mawkish sensibility, the spurious philanthropy, which sympathizes with them in matters in which they need no pity. But the poor have a pride, which, though often foolish, ought not to be needlessly wounded or offended. They often have, too, a spirit of independence, which ought to be cherished. It is at the basis of every well-formed, vigorous character. Every church is bound to prevent its members from becoming a public charge. How ruinous it would have been to the prospects of the infant Church at Jerusalem for the poor saints that were there to have become a public charge, or to have wandered about asking alms. The mendicant friars in the Church of Rome can never derive authority for their conduct from the Word of God, nor from the example of the primitive Christians. When begging becomes a trade, character is gone; and when it becomes general, a community is ruined. It is sometimes said that if the church supports her own poor, and her members also pay their proportion of the public taxes, they will do more than their share. This is true. But no man was ever in the end a loser by any right act performed for the benefit of the poor, and especially of the pious poor. "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again." Prov. xix., 17. In this point the judgment of the Church has never wavered, as might be shown by a reference to all her history. Often has she earnestly recommended to every congregation to take special care of their poor, or distressed widows and orphans, and to administer to them all proper relief and assistance.

When a particular church is not able to give necessary support to its poor, it ought to apply to sister churches for aid, and collections should be forwarded for their relief.

For this we have the best authority, the example of the primitive churches, guided by the apostles. In most churches a "collection for the poor" is taken at every administration of the Lord's Supper. Wherever this is necessary, it should be done. For the same reason, deacons should be appointed wherever they are needed and can be had. The care of the pious poor should never be left to the civil authorities. Pious deacons are not merely for the purpose of relieving the temporal wants of the poor, but they should pay special attention to their spiritual state, and be a bond of union between them and other members of the church. That the office of deacon was perpetual was abundantly proved in the Westminster Assembly. See Lightfoot, vol. xiii., p. 86-88. That it is of apostolic origin is clear from Acts vi., 1-8.

But what shall we say of poor-houses for those who are not members of the church? To a painful extent they are mismanaged. Sometimes no little cruelty is practiced in them. It is very difficult to gather a great number of the poor together without having a considerable number whose manners and morals are very vicious. No church should allow any of its members to become inmates of these institutions.

Often we can show no greater kindness to the poor than by giving them good advice. This is a weighty matter, and should never be done for the purpose of getting rid of them. Much less should it be done in a surly or haughty manner. Want of foresight is often both the cause and the accompaniment of poverty. To give good counsel to such is like lending our eyes to the blind. Seneca speaks of aiding our fellow-men, *alium re, alium consilio, alium gratia*.

Sometimes a loan is better charity than a gift. But we must exercise great caution lest our loan should only lead to further embarrassment. Money should not be lent

where there is no reasonable prospect that the borrower will be able to refund it agreeably to promise. But where a little aid in this way would be well used, it is always wise to give it. "The poverty of the poor is his destruction." ✓ Poverty perpetuates itself: "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean."

✓ In the United States, the great parent of poverty is idleness. When this is the case, and persons will not labor, when able, they must suffer the consequences. "He that will not work, shall not eat," is a rule both Christian and salutary. Let every pastor read the life of Oberlin, and of ✓ such men, and see what wonders can be accomplished in improving the temporal condition of the poorest people.

Of intemperance among the poor, it is not easy to say enough. It is much to be regretted when the spirit of frolic gets into neighborhoods of the poor. It carries with it waste and carelessness. It uniformly vitiates the manners, and leads to the acquiring of low tastes. And when drunkenness generally prevails in a community, it is doomed. As an evil, its name is legion. It is of vast importance that all the poor should, if possible, have separate abodes, and those not too large for them to be kept neat and clean. It greatly corrupts many families that they are in the same tenement with others, and are doomed to hear their impure conversation, and to be annoyed by their negligent habits. It hardens men's hearts to see the misery of others, if nothing can be done to relieve it.

All the poor ought to be encouraged in health to save something of their earnings. In summer let them lay up for winter. Savings-banks, when properly conducted, are valuable institutions. But commonly they will not receive a sum less than \$5, and the difficulty often is to persuade the poor to lay aside a small amount each week till it amounts to that sum.



Let the children of the poor always be educated. If they grow up as mere animals, they will commonly live and die such. Not only get them into Sabbath-schools, but into good schools taught six days in the week. Among the poor are many bright minds. All they need is a fair chance.

Induce the poor, if possible, to frequent the House of God. If they are old and hard of hearing, have seats provided for them near the pulpit. To induce them to come to the House of God, visit them and speak kindly to them. ✓ If necessary, give them suitable clothing. It is not wholly a vicious feeling that hinders people from going in rags to Christian assemblies. In many cities and towns there exist various humane institutions, some for particular classes of unfortunates, and others for the poor generally. Some of these are very useful in ascertaining the habits and circumstances of the poor, in learning the causes of their poverty, in devising means for the improvement of their physical and moral condition, in holding out inducements to them to be industrious, cleanly, economical, and provident, in dissuading them from those vices and habits which beget want and misery, in providing food, fuel, clothing, shelter, and medicine for those who can not help themselves, in educating children, in teaching girls to sew, and in furnishing work at fair prices to those who are willing to aid themselves, especially in giving employment to women.

In some parts of the country it is customary to let out the keeping of the poor of the town or county to the lowest bidder. Such a usage ought to be broken up. It involves much suffering, and leads to great cruelties. It brings the vicious on a level with the humane, and puts all the poor of the vicinage for twelve months in the power of one, who may be a stranger to the feelings of mercy. If

any ask for motives for the performance of our duties to the poor, they are always on hand.

One is that the poor are our brethren, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. The law of nature does therefore bind us to care for them and seek their good. God often enjoins it upon us to help the poor. The Concordance, under the word *poor*, will show numerous texts of this kind. God denounces very heavy curses on those who disregard this duty: "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard." Psa. xxi., 13. The very highest truths of religion are urged to persuade us to this duty: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. viii., 9. This is the way Paul persuades the Corinthians to this good work. Our Saviour tells us that the destinies of men in the last day will be very much decided by the tempers they have evinced toward the poor, the sick, the prisoner, the persecuted. Matt. xxv., 35-46.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### SABBATH-SCHOOLS.

THIS chapter is not designed to supersede any of those full and practical treatises on Sabbath-schools, which are so justly and highly esteemed. Nor is it intended to settle or even discuss those questions which are much mooted among the friends of Sabbath-schools. But it seems right that in attempting a treatise on Pastoral Theology something should be said, at least by way of suggestion, on this important subject.

I. It is now (1873) less than a century since Robert Raikes first established Sabbath-schools in Great Britain. In our own country there was no Sabbath-school till after the beginning of the present century. The first Sabbath-school in the United States was opened at Pittsburgh, in Pennsylvania, on the 22d of August, in the year 1809. ✓ From that time to 1815, Sabbath-schools were started in many places; and in 1816 a number of ladies in the city of New York formed the first Sabbath-school Union in America. In less than fifteen years from that date, Sabbath-schools were found in almost every section of the Union, so that in 1830 at least one seventh of the population between five and fifteen years of age was enjoying their benefits. At this present time the number of Sabbath-schools in the United States is probably not less than twenty-six or twenty-seven thousand. These nurseries of piety have in them at least two hundred and ten thousand teachers and officers, and over a million of scholars.

II. When we open the Scriptures we find frequent men-



tion made of the young, and of our duty to instruct them. Before Moses left the world, God said to his people: "Ye shall teach them [these my words] your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth." Dent. xi., 19–21. Here, too, are the words of David: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Psa. xxxiv., 11. Often and earnestly does Solomon address the young. The very last words of the Old Testament are these: "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Mal. iv., 6. Jesus himself said: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. xix., 14. And when Jesus said to Peter, "Feed my sheep," we should not forget that he first said, "Feed my lambs." John xxi., 15, 16. Paul mentions it as an interesting fact in the life of his young friend Timothy that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. iii., 15. So that beyond all doubt the Scriptures do solemnly enjoin marked and early attention to the religious instruction of children and youth.

III. The importance of well-conducted Sabbath-school instruction can hardly be overestimated. It brings into contact with the juvenile mind the glorious and saving truths of God's Word, and that at a time when deep impressions are made with comparative ease. It is a mighty

aid to parental instruction. It brings under benign influences multitudes whose instruction at home in religious matters is sadly deficient or wholly neglected. For topics of reflection it gives the highest and sublimest themes of revelation. Now "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." Psa. xix., 7, 8. "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it." Psa. cxix., 140. Children have their sorrows and trials as well as older people. Like them they need the solace of divine truth. Nor can any young man ever cleanse his way so effectually as by taking heed thereto according to God's Word. Psa. cxix., 9. The right study of God's Word has such an effect upon the character as nothing else has. One who was pious from an early age said: "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts." Psa. cxix., 99, 100.

IV. None but God can estimate the silent, though for a time the latent influence of sound Sabbath-school instruction. Our blessed Master said: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." Mark iv., 26, 27. Again: "Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and cast it into his garden, and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it." Luke xiii., 18, 19. We may well rest assured that the Word of God is quick and powerful, and that it shall not return void. Under the power of it, "the mountains and hills shall break forth

into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Isa. lv., 12, 13.

V. The power of well-conducted Sabbath-schools in promoting intellectual culture can hardly be overestimated. Why should it not be so? The greatest themes, in the pleasantest way, claim the attention. No well-managed school wears the aspect of drudgery. All is vivacity and attention. From a sermon preached by the late Dr. B. B. Wisner more than forty years ago, I take this extract from the communication of a highly respectable individual: "A Sabbath-school was established in my vicinity, and furnished with a select library of books. I did nothing for its encouragement, not so much as to permit the members of my family to attend. Before this school was established, my children were not excelled by any in the neighborhood for their proficiency in study. In one year, however, I had the mortification of discovering that the children who had been in the habit of attending the Sabbath-school had obtained much more information than mine, that they had acquired a fondness for books, while mine were the devotees of amusement, and that they had imbibed moral principles, which, with all the partiality of a father, were, I must confess, better than those with which mine were actuated. I therefore resolved to break through my rule, as an experiment. I sent my children to the Sabbath-school. I contributed my proportion to the library, that I might not be considered parsimonious. And the experience of only a few months has convinced me that, on the principle of economy in the education of children, Sabbath-schools have advantages sufficiently great to entitle them to the highest eulogium. It is my deliberate opinion that, in the



progress of education, those children who have the additional advantage of a Sabbath-school, will learn at least one quarter more in the same time than those who neglect or are denied this privilege."

VI. Much has been said respecting the power of Sabbath-schools in the prevention of crime. Mr. Raikes, the author of this system of instruction, said that during twenty years, of three thousand persons taught in these schools, he had, after strict inquiry and diligent search, heard of but one who had been sent to prison as a criminal. Sometimes no doubt extravagant things have been said on this subject. But there is no reason to doubt that crime, and vice, and pauperism are every where checked by well-regulated Sabbath-schools. The process of thought is very simple. Two poor children, on the skirts of Washington City, were out gathering sticks to make their mothers' pots boil. A plank had fallen from a fence. The girl had collected her armful. She told the boy to take that board. He said he could not. She asked why? His emphatic answer was, "Because I go to Sunday-school." This told the whole story. The people of this country must either establish good schools for moral instruction, or they must spend vast amounts of money in building prisons for juvenile delinquents as well as for older offenders; and then still larger sums in conducting prison discipline through all its tedious and painful forms.

VII. Great is the power of Sabbath-schools in promoting the knowledge of God and scriptural piety. With the promised blessing of God how could it be otherwise? By divine appointment revealed truth has a sanctifying power. In well-established churches a very large proportion of new members has for a long time come from the Sabbath-schools. The Word of God pierces the heart of the young as well as of adult persons. Not only are the pupils

thus blessed, but through them the truth is carried to the hearts of fathers and mothers. In his essay on Sabbath-schools in the Christian and civic economy of large towns, Dr. Chalmers says: "Parents, in spite of themselves, feel an interest in that which interests and occupies their children; and, through the medium of natural affection, have their thoughts been caught to the subject of Christianity; and the very tasks and exercises of their children have brought a theme to their evening circle, upon which, aforesaid, not a syllable of utterance was heard; and still more, when a small and select library is attached to the institution, has it been the means of circulating, through many a household privacy, such wisdom and such piety as were indeed new visitants upon a scene till now untouched by any footsteps of sacredness." True religion is the effect of sound religious knowledge; nor can we hope for the general prevalence of vital piety except through the power of Bible knowledge borne to the heart by the Holy Ghost.

VIII. Sabbath-schools are filling the world with a race of rare men. Of twenty-four foreign missionaries met in London for a social and devotional meeting, twenty-three had been Sabbath-school children. The *Christian Spectator* says: "Anderson and Patterson, who have done wonders in Europe in regard to the Bible cause, both received their first religious impressions at Sabbath-schools. And the celebrated Dr. Morrison, missionary to China, who translated the whole Bible into Chinese, a language spoken by nearly three hundred millions of people, became pious at a Sabbath-school." In short, go where you will among assemblies of pious men, and you will find the foot-prints of Sabbath-schools.

IX. In fact, it is rare to find among decent and serious people any where opposition to these good institutions.

Now, as of old, hatred to the progress of Christ's cause and the glory of his name is found either among the vicious and profane, the ignorant and the prejudiced, or among surly old hypocrites. Often have I been struck with that historic narrative of the first Evangelist: "And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus said unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Matt. xxi., 15, 16. No one claims that Sabbath-schools, even when rightly conducted, are of divine institution; but it is clear that they happily fall in with the whole spirit of divine instruction. Let not the children's bread be taken from them.

X. It is, perhaps, not known to some that, when first started, Sabbath-schools were conducted by *paid* teachers. The price usually given was thirty-three cents, or the third of a dollar, for each Sabbath. The great body of teachers in our day could not possibly be had for any money. The considerations which move them are far more noble than any thing earthly. But suppose each teacher was paid the little pittance already stated, then the two hundred and ten thousand officers and teachers in the schools of our country would at this time be receiving about seventy thousand dollars per week, and in twelve months their salaries would rise to the sum of three million, six hundred and forty thousand dollars; yet not one cent is paid for tuition. Were ever sound instruction and valuable knowledge diffused at so cheap a rate as in our Sabbath-schools? If so, when and where?

XI. If these things are so, it is clear that pastors, evangelists, and teachers in the Church of God have a deep in-



terest, and ought to feel a lively concern in the establishment and success of Sabbath-schools. This concern should not perish in mere emotion; it should bring forth good fruit. Pastors of churches, therefore, ought to mind the following things:

1. They should keep themselves well informed as to the number and spiritual wants of the children in their vicinage. No obscurity in social life should elude their notice; and no elevation rise quite above the grasp of their attentions.

2. Pastors should keep themselves well informed respecting the best means and methods of conducting the exercises of Sabbath-schools. This is a great matter.

3. They should vigilantly supervise the selection of books for the Sabbath-school library. Not a few offered for this purpose are trash, and some are worse than trash.

4. As they can, they ought to visit the Sabbath-schools, and encourage teachers and pupils. If they have little or no talent for addressing children, let them endeavor to acquire a readiness for such pleasing work.

5. Both publicly and privately pastors should pray for the success of Sabbath-schools, and implore God's blessing on teachers and scholars.

6. Pastors should endeavor to exclude from all their schools those worldly and malign influences which eat as doth a canker, and corrupt the very best efforts of good people. Such influences are many and seductive.

7. Pastors should, by example and exhortation, urge the people to contribute all the funds necessary for providing a comfortable room, convenient sittings, and all the requisite apparatus in the shape of class-books, lesson-books, maps, cards, and libraries, for the highest success of Sabbath-schools.

8. Pastors should carefully instruct their people respecting the duties of family religion and catechising, and let them know that the Sabbath-school is not designed to supersede lessons of piety under the parental roof, but to aid in impressing them. ✓

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### DOING GOOD WITH THE PEN.

THE pen is an artificial tongue. By it even the educated deaf mute speaks his thoughts. By it any one may send his thoughts abroad. At what precise time writing was first used, need not now be decided. It was in use in the days of Job; for there are allusions to it in the book that bears his name: "Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever!" (xix., 23, 24). "Oh that mine adversary had written a book! Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me" (xxxix., 35, 36). So that it is certain that influencing men by some form of writing is very ancient.

There are different kinds of writing. The most common are the most useful. All are potential for good or evil. ✓ "A goose-quill is more dangerous than a lion's claw." It is with special reference to utility that the subject is now brought up. How shall I be useful? is one of the most serious and weighty questions. How shall I be useful with the pen? is an inquiry worthy of very careful consideration. In considering the matter, attention is naturally called at first to epistolary writing. Letters are among the most / powerful means of influencing mankind. Liberty, learning, and religion owe much to this simple method of propagating correct opinions and promoting right conduct. Some able men have probably done more good in this than in any other way. No reflecting man can doubt that the destiny of many, both for this world and the next, is much affected by this simple means. It is not generally known



to what extent a corrupting correspondence is carried on among those from whom better things might have been expected. And we are often surprised, on examining the papers of very humble people, to find how many precious letters they have received and treasured up. Under the guidance of inspiration, the apostles have set us examples in this kind of writing. Their twenty-one epistles are models of affectionate solicitude, tenderness, and fidelity. ✓ Some of them show extraordinary address; and all of them must have awakened very lively feelings in those to whom they were addressed. After them come those writers called the early fathers. The epistles of Clement, Ignatius, Cyprian, Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine have long been in high estimation. During the first century of the Reformation, the number of letters written seems to have been prodigious and their influence vast. So far as preserved, they are to this day the very best sources of light on a great variety of subjects. Of all the moderns, John Newton has, perhaps, been the most distinguished in religious epistles. ✓ They are as much sought after and read as ever they were. They have soothed many a troubled spirit, have resolved many a doubting mind, have animated many a weary pilgrim, and called back to duty and devotion many a backslider in heart. Perhaps we have no better models of letters designed to influence many, and especially those who have with us but a slight acquaintance.

Any extended notice of the letters of Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, and Symmachus, among the ancient Romans, and of numerous moderns who wrote on a great variety of topics—friendship, science, literature, politics, and art—is here omitted; not because their epistles are either uninteresting or unimportant, but because they do not fall in with the matter of personal usefulness, which is now to be considered.

There are a thousand ways of writing a good letter. Some very charming writers so fill their letters with pleasant allusions to matters understood only by themselves and their correspondents that they possess but little interest to others. This was the case with the late Dr. Nevins, who wrote many letters, and was always a favorite with his friends. To some extent the same was true of the Rev. James W. Douglass. This is not mentioned as a defect. It makes the letter to a friend all the more pointed and pertinent. Perhaps it was Pope who said: "The letters of friends are not worse for being fit for none else to read. The effusion of a moment ought to be the characteristic of all familiar writing. It is a strange recommendation, but a true one." In his life of Cowley, Dr. Sprat says: "The letters that pass between particular friends, if they are written as they ought to be, can scarce ever be fit to see the light. They should not consist of fulsome compliments, or tedious politics, or elaborate elegancies, or general fancies, but they should have a native clearness and shortness, a domestical plainness, and a peculiar kind of familiarity, which can only affect the humor of those to whom they are addressed. The very same passages, which make writings of this nature delightful among friends, will lose all manner of taste when they come to be read by those that are indifferent. In such letters the souls of men should appear undressed; and in that negligent habit they may be fit to be seen by one or two in a chamber, but not to go abroad into the streets."

The qualities of a truly good letter are many. It should be seasonable. It should not sing songs to those of a sad heart, nor mourn to those who are rejoicing. To him that is afflicted pity should be shown by his friend. To him that is in danger of undue exaltation, a letter should give timely warning. It should not reprove the innocent, nor

chide the despondent. It should suit the circumstances of him who is addressed. It should also be seemly for the writer. We are shocked at jokes from the afflicted man. We are pained at a repining spirit in any one. Propriety is a matter of great importance. We have in civil and military life a wonderful example of propriety in General Washington. He seems never to have acted out of character. His letters are models of propriety. In religious letters impropriety is very offensive. Letters should not be tedious, yet, when the occasion demands, they may be long and full. What George Hay said of a toast is commonly applicable to a letter: "It should be short, sweet, and surprising." Not that all good letters are either epigrammatic or antithetical in their character. They may often be in the plainest style. In letters, more than in any other kind of composition, are we offended with the spinning out of thoughts to undue length. Yet there is no exact number of words, sentences, or paragraphs to be put into all letters of the same class. The time, the subject, the parties must determine many things respecting them. Religious letters should not be set lectures, yet they should not be careless hints. Reason teaches that we should always gird up the loins of our minds when we speak of sacred things. Very recondite thoughts, and enigmatical or otherwise dark sayings, are out of place in epistolary writings.

In a good letter frankness is essential. Lord Bacon tells of a politician who reserved the chief matter of his letter for a postscript. Such a device is commonly shallow. It has been attempted in later times. The consequence is a loss of confidence in the writer's candor. We never like artifice to be practiced toward ourselves. In a professed friend we abhor it. A good writer says: "I do not love to write letters where compliments and apologies are necessary. Every thing that comes directly from the heart, and



seems like conversation, is most agreeable to me. And, indeed, what is writing letters but a kind of conversation? Therefore it ought to be easy, free, and unreserved." It can hardly be doubted that this is the general sentiment of mankind.

✓ Whenever opportunity is afforded, we should give encouragement in our letters on religious subjects. There are great numbers of mourning, despondent professors. To such we should hold up the promises in their true light and full force. Besides, all men have their trials, and some of these are very sharp. These often incline to sadness. Where there is a constitutional or morbid tendency to dark views of things, we should be the more careful to speak a word in season to him that is weary. In this respect Newton's letters are admirable, abounding in strong consolations.

✓ In letters we can often give our friends some useful account of the books we have lately been reading, and our judgment of them. If this is done with care, it will do us good as well as our correspondents. We should warn them not to read books that are useless or injurious. We should commend those that may do good to others; not that we should be setting tasks to our friends, nor be urging them to buy books beyond their means. But we can easily give some general idea of a book, or quote some good sentiment or sentence from it.

Letters have one advantage over all else that we write. They are always read. Commonly they are read more than once, and often by more than one person. Any striking expression is sure to be felt and remembered. The good that we do in this way is not likely to be known by us in this life. The best parts of a letter are often not replied to at all. In proof of the power of written over printed matter, it is commonly observable that

people generally read their letters first, and then their papers.

If any would form a correct estimate of the influence of letters on men, let him seriously and carefully think how much they have done in forming his own opinions, moulding his own character, and directing the course of his own life. It is a great mistake that we can do but little good by addressing letters to persons very different from us in age, mental habits, and religious associations. Few things are more useful to us than an exchange of views with those who in some respects widely differ from us. Thus Newton, full of love and of evangelical views, was eminently useful to Rev. Thomas Scott, at that time a proud and heterodox man, full of disputation and self-conceit. Read his letters to him as models of address and fidelity. They will sharpen our wits, make us studious of all Christian courtesy, and lead us to cultivate holy wisdom, even the wisdom that dwells with prudence. The result of all that has been said will be fully gained if it shall awaken more zeal, and lead to more care in this method of doing good. Lord Bacon says: "Such letters as are written from wise men are of all the words of man, in my judgment, the best; for they are more natural than orations and public speeches, and more advised than conferences of private ones."

It is also important that you learn to make a right use of the periodical press. This is a mighty engine for good or evil, according as it is rightly or wrongly used. A good paragraph or article written for the newspapers or magazines may travel round the world. Many an article has been read by millions of people within twelve months after its first publication. The late pious Austin Dickinson devoted much of the latter part of his life to endeavors of this kind, not only writing himself, but inducing others to use their pens.

One of the most useful methods of employing the pen is the preparation of tracts and small books for various classes. The most successful modern writer of tracts was Leigh Richmond. The popularity and success of this class of the productions of his pen may be truly said to be wonderful. The Dairyman's Daughter has been translated into many languages and undergone almost countless editions. The pious author had peculiar gifts for narrative writing. He who succeeds in writing one good tract has not lived in vain. The late Dr. Nevins said that he had prayed for years that he might write a good tract. His prayer was answered, and he wrote several. Tracts which in the writing of them have been much prayed over will be most likely to be useful. As a means of usefulness, this is by no means to be despised. Hundreds of thousands, and even millions of copies of a good tract, must exert a wide influence over the minds of those who read them. Richard Baxter knew of no Tract Society, but he printed and circulated his own tracts. With what avidity that pious man would have seized upon the facilities now afforded for doing good in this way. There are several living men whose thoughts are before the community in millions of pages, because they have written five, ten, or more good, popular tracts.

It is a question of practical importance, How far should ministers publish occasional sermons or arguments on religion, when they believe that they will not undergo a second edition? In reply, it may be said that there are two classes of authors. The first writes for generations to come. The other writes but for the present generation. The latter class is the larger. The former is the more distinguished. But it is not possible for any mortal to say which class confers the greater blessings on mankind. Nor can it commonly be told to which class a given man



belongs until his thoughts are published, and often not till one or two generations have passed away. Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* were despised by the mass of their countrymen for a long time after they were written. Even Lord Bacon appealed to posterity as the righteous arbiter of his literary merits. We should always be careful not to discourage publications designed to meet particular exigencies. We should not undervalue that class of writings designed at once to check rising errors, to give a new impulse to benevolence, or to put the masses to thinking and searching for truth. Every age ought to produce a large body of publications for its own use. Let no man despise a good writer as ephemeral, if his work is but useful in his own day. Yet it is a mercy, a great favor, to be allowed to write even a small work for other ages and countries besides our own. Let us all earnestly covet the best gifts.

As to that class of writings which we call books, some are mere toy-shops. They are full of curious things, but they serve no higher end than that of diversion. The whole reading and observation of some men are for amusement. Such live neither for the good of themselves nor of others. For a minister of Christ to earn, or to desire the reputation of a literary harlequin, is monstrous.

Other books are like shops where only remnants are sold. Nothing is complete. You may find what you need, but there is seldom enough of it. You are struck with the endless variety, and wonder how so much could be collected; but after a wearisome search you go away disappointed. There is something there, but not all you want.

Some books are like shops, where you find vast quantities of rich goods in the piece. The wise man loves to deal here. He is sure to be suited. He always gets the worth of his money. True, he finds little exactly suited

to immediate wants, but every thing may be made useful. Bacon, Burke, Howe, and Edwards wrote some things of this description. Their amplitude more than compensates for want of exactness. Miners never object that the ore is found in too large masses. To be able to produce a book of this description is hardly given to one man in each generation.

Other books are like shops, where you find an excellent variety already prepared for use. They have something to suit every one. They are full of things that are constantly in demand. You wonder at the variety. You wonder more at the skill and judgment displayed in the fitness of every thing. You are pleased because you are profited. You resolve to do better, because you wish to have solid excellence. Books of this description are brought out every century. They do great good. Were it possible to extinguish the light of one of them, it would be a public calamity.

Of these two last-named classes of books, we may say with Milton that "books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragons' teeth; and, being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."

To be able during a lifetime to bring out one such volume is a great honor to any man; and, if he does it with right motives and to a right end, he shall not lose his reward. Some aged men among the living, and many pious men who have departed this life, have unquestionably done more good by their writings than by their oral addresses, though they were abundant in preaching and exhortation.

It is not unseasonable to present these thoughts. If any living man shall produce a good book, it is very probable that he will early in life regard such a performance as possible and as very highly desirable.

The power of good books to bless mankind is very great. A wise man would rather be the author of some of our best and brief religious books than to have written all the Greek and Roman classics. At the height of his fame and honor, William Wirt, the accomplished lawyer, the elegant writer, and the finished scholar, turned aside from the voice of human applause, and found his only satisfaction in religion. A single stroke of affliction stripped the gay world of all its attraction. "I have no taste now," he writes, "for worldly business. I go to it reluctantly. I would keep company only with my Saviour and his holy book."

In such a frame as this, the author of *The British Spy* and *Life of Patrick Henry*—books which have charmed tens of thousands—turned to the writings of one of the old Puritans. He found it more attractive than the pages of Addison, or Johnson, or Milton. "I took up the *Saint's Rest* lately," he says, "and found it like an old sandalwood box, as fresh and fragrant as if it had just been made, although it has been exhaling its odor for a hundred and eighty years."

Daniel Webster said to a friend: "If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, and the people do not become religious, I do not know



✓ what is to become of us as a nation." There is something in this one sentence for solemn reflection on the part of every patriot and every Christian. If God and his Word are not in our midst, the devil will be; anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness, will reign without mitigation and without end.

By good books we may hope to avert some of the evils of bad books now thrown upon society. The trade-lists of our bookstores show more than five thousand volumes of novels. Dr. Hawks was right when he said: "No habitual reader of novels can love the Bible, or any other book that demands thought or inculcates the serious duties of life. ✓ He dwells in a region of imagination, where he is disgusted with the plainness and simplicity of truth, with the sober realities that demand his attention as a rational and immortal being, and an accountable subject of God's government."

Some time ago the *National Magazine* said: "Bad books are as old as literature itself; but our age is a bibliographical epoch in this respect. It teems with literary miasma, and the desolating plague ranges about us as do sometimes outbreaks of contagion in the physical world. Ejaculatory lamentations enough are uttered over it by individual good men, but sometimes more is requisite to arrest the evil—some moral sanity project, more comprehensive, more potent, if any indeed is possible. ✓ What it can be, we attempt not now to say; we but refer to the prevalence of the evil, and submit some general suggestions respecting it. The extent of this nefarious literature can not only be inferred from the great variety of its publications, but it is seen staring us in the face wherever we travel through the land. Agencies and dépôts are organized for it every where—it is the most omnipresent product of the press, except the newspaper. Though many

otherwise respectable houses are engaged in it, partially at least, it is nevertheless acquiring such importance as to assume a distinct business position. There are firms of no inconsiderable pretensions almost exclusively devoted to it. We have said that we have no comprehensive remedy to propose for this evil. We know not that there is any: one remedial suggestion, however, we may make. It is, the moral sentiment of the community should be more powerfully, more scathingly directed against it, and against the men who uphold it. The meanness and enormity of the business in its details is felt by every considerate man; but are the presses and the merchants engaged in it branded as they should be? Do they not shelter themselves with comparative respectability under that false and most dangerous corruption of business morality, which has, within some years, become too prevalent among us, and which teaches that whatsoever comes within the "line" of a man's business is right, and not to be embarrassed with questions of casuistry; that the general morality of his calling is to cover its secondary immoralities? It is this flimsy and demoralizing logic that still mainly sustains, in respectable trade and respectable hotels, the abominations of the liquor traffic, and innumerable downright iniquities that find shelter under it. Alas for the self-respect of men who can thus willfully blindfold themselves to the great moral disasters they are inflicting on the world!"

USE YOUR PEN ARIGHT.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### SHOULD I BECOME A FOREIGN MISSIONARY?

THE moral condition of unevangelical nations remains substantially the same as it has ever been. The essence of every system of false religion is deep, gross, foul corruption. We have some pictures of heathenism, drawn by the pencil of inspiration, which are to the life, and never will become caricatures. The folly of heathen worship is matter of divine derision. If you would see how Jehovah ridicules heathenism, read the one hundred and fifteenth Psalm, and the fortieth and forty-fourth chapters of Isaiah.

It is a shame to speak of some of the corrupt practices of Pagans. Those which may be mentioned are well pointed out by Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, the sixth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and the second, fourth, and fifth chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians. What Paganism once was, it still is, and will continue to be. A new delineation of its general features is therefore not called for. Ignorance reigns in terror. Superstition has riveted her massive chains on all heathen nations. Mummeries are preferred to intelligent devotion. Horrid midnight orgies and silly orisons are celebrated with untiring zeal. The smoke of abominable incense ascends from ten thousand altars. In every heathen nation are countless habitations of cruelty. No Pagan people, ancient or modern, has ever had in its language a word that signified to their minds what we understand by personal holiness or sanctification. If they



had not the *name*, it is hardly probable that they had the *thing* itself.

There are two great objects, neither of which may be lost sight of in Christian effort. The first regards the retaining of ground already gained—the maintenance of evangelical doctrine, discipline, and worship, in their purity and power, in all places where the Gospel is now preached, and Christian institutions are now planted. This is a matter of vast importance. Could the Church have maintained her cause and her purity in the East, from the planting of the Gospel until now, it can hardly admit of a doubt that ere this the entire earth would have been girded with the mantle of holy love. Instead of this, however, she has in many powerful nations been wasted away to a ghastly skeleton. The poison of error is drunk in by her children as soon as they are born; and the sorcery of sin has maddened almost every head and heart in all those regions where Christ suffered, and Paul preached, and Chrysostom thundered, and Athanasius resisted, and Augustine reasoned. So that in a peculiar sense the Church in all those regions must “do her first works.” Thus we see the importance of Christian effort and a Christian ministry in countries already evangelized.

The other great object to be kept in view is, the making of conquests to Jesus Christ in the region and shadow of death; the unfolding and planting in impregnable fortresses of love and entire devotion the banner of the great Captain of our salvation. This is by far the greatest work, to the accomplishment of which the Church is now called to make sacrifices, endure hardships, practice self-denial, and make full proof of her power with God and man. Hence appears the mighty importance of holy effort and a scriptural ministry *abroad*.

A call to the work of the ministry in general has been

already considered. Let us briefly discuss a few questions and matters connected with the subject of a call to become a foreign missionary. To one of old God said, "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." He may in his providence say the same to some of us. The remarks offered will be chiefly and peculiarly adapted to ministers and candidates for the ministry of the Gospel, although others may be involved in them also; for it is certainly true that farmers, printers, mechanics of many kinds, teachers, male and female, and physicians are required to the perfect organization, and especially to the demanded enlargement of missionary enterprise. Let not then any individual settle it in his own mind, without candid inquiry, frequent reflection, and earnest prayer, that he is *not* required to bear a *direct* part in this great matter.

The first remark offered on this subject is that every man is bound by most solemn and perfectly indissoluble obligations to inquire not only what God will have him to do, but also when, and how, and where he will have him to do it. He who held the seven stars of the seven churches of Asia in his right hand, claims the right and asserts the prerogative now, as well as formerly, of saying where his people and ministers shall live, and labor, and die. He who directed James to Jerusalem, John to Ephesus and Patmos, and Paul to the Gentiles, still has the government on his shoulder, and can not be pleased with an exhibition of self-will either in the choice of a mode or field of labor.

Again: the basis of a call to preach the Gospel among the heathen must be a call to the work of the ministry in general. A man, therefore, having satisfied his mind that he is called to the work of the ministry, has a solid foundation for the inquiry now instituted. Furthermore: God, in his adorable providence, has so ordered missionary af-

fairs that a man must not wait for a voice from heaven, or an angel, or synod, or a presbytery, or a council, or a missionary society, or even for a brother to present the matter to his mind, in order to bind him to a most solemn, honest, and thorough canvassing of the question, "Shall I go to the heathen?" Formerly ecclesiastical courts and councils designated missionaries; but now we have the voice of God only in his ordinary providence and by his Spirit, saying, "Whom shall I send?" And personal love, and zeal, and devotion must give the answer, "Here am I; send me." Whether the churches have done right in declining so extensively the practice of nominating brethren for a foreign field, need not now be determined. Perhaps in this there has been error. It might do good, great good, to have pastors of churches designated to the foreign department. Be this as it may, a man may not innocently wait for such designation as a requisite to a solemn consideration of the subject. It is worthy of notice, however, that even in the days of infallible guidance, neither councils nor apostles seem to have exercised themselves much in dividing the harvest-field to the several reapers. The Great Head of the Church even then disposed of this business very much without human interference.

It is not superfluous to state that there is nothing supernatural, nay, not even any thing of religious romance, in becoming a foreign missionary. There was a time when the halo surrounding the tomb of a Brainerd, or a Martyn, or even the person of a foreign missionary, was peculiar and unusual. But of late things are different. The time has nearly come when intelligent Christians do not for a moment suppose that the spirit leading a man to Siam, or China, or Ceylon, or Greenland, or Patagonia, or Africa, for Christ's sake, is any other than the spirit which leads a man to be a devoted servant of Christ in the hoary mount-



ains, the retired valleys, or the populous cities of his native land.

It is also not to be forgotten that, if there be in our habits, constitution, temperament, education, talents, gifts, graces, or wishes, any thing peculiar, and leading us to prefer, or making us specially fit for any particular field, station, climate, language, people, or department of labor, we can be gratified or suited. And it ought to be matter of gratitude to all whom it may concern, that so intelligent and in every way excellent advisers can be obtained in our own country, enabling one, even at home, to determine with tolerable accuracy where he may compass the most good in his short lifetime.

It is important to mention that there is a very common error in the method of stating and considering the question of personal engagement in foreign missions. Men ordinarily say thus, "Why should I leave home, and country, and friends, to go abroad?" when they ought to say, "Why should I cling to home, and country, and friends, when hundreds of millions of my race are ready to fall into an eternal hell, and have no one to point them to the Lamb of God?" Such being the posture of this business, this question now comes up fairly to our view, *Taking the foregoing statements as true, what constitutes a call to the labors and rewards of a foreign missionary?* Let us first attend to those points of discussion which relate to QUALIFICATIONS.

*Much stress has often been laid upon the possession of a vigorous constitution and sound health, as a qualification for foreign labors.* Without denying the value of a good constitution and vigorous health as great comforts and blessings in themselves, it is right to state that evidently undue importance has been attached to this item in reference to the ministry, both at home and abroad. If a

man must endure languor, and buffet disease, and have tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day, may he not expend his remaining energies in publishing the Gospel as well as in mercantile transactions, or in husbandry, or at the bar? And if he may do this in his native State, why may he not do it in Africa, in Burmah, in Ceylon, in the islands of the sea, or among the Indian tribes of North America? To shut our mouths on this subject, God has raised up and put into the ministry such men as Timothy, who "had often infirmities;" as Owen, who was willing to give all his learning for sound health; as Richard Baxter, who spoke and wrote as if already in his winding-sheet; as Thomas Scott, who for some time prepared to preach by the use of an emetic on the day previous; as James P. Wilson, whose almost bloodless countenance for years gave proof of the disease that preyed upon the body. Indeed, reference might be made to an army of the honest and most successful of the soldiers of Jesus Christ, who have fought, and toiled, and died in the cause of Redemption. And, as if for the very purpose of cutting short our excuses and cavilings, God raised up and kept alive on heathen ground, in the midst of enormous sufferings, great labors, and eminent usefulness, a Brainerd and a Martyn, than whom no men have shone in the history of modern missions with greater lustre, nor perhaps shall shine until the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord.

Besides, how does a man know but a change of climate and habit of living might restore to perfect soundness his present enfeebled body? If we go to the South of France for health, why not go to the Sandwich Islands or Ceylon for the same? Even extreme hardship has saved a sinking constitution, when nothing else would. But says one, "A man *must* take care of his life, and must not endanger his

health." Is this *true*? Does the *Bible* speak thus? Hear the words of Paul: "I count not my life dear." "I am willing to spend and be spent." "I am willing, not only to be bound, but to die, if need be." Hear Jesus also: "He that hateth not his life, can not be my disciple." "He that saves his life shall lose it." The Scriptures are full of sentiments very averse to the carnal reasonings of men. It is true that if health has so far failed as to destroy all reasonable hope that one would be no more than a burden to the cause, then such ought to remain at home. Otherwise health does not seem to be a point deserving much prominence in the consideration of this business, if we may select a fit climate. I shall not easily forget the words of a dear brother destined to Africa, as he gave us, at his embarkation, the last cheerful farewell, and said: "I am willing to be sick and to die for Jesus Christ." A little of the spirit that dictated this expression would make great changes in our views, if hitherto we have been in error.

*Patience in enduring privation and want of a temporal kind is another subject worthy of our attention.* Patience in any man is a high virtue, and is to its possessor invaluable. Beyond doubt, the foreign missionary may need much patience in enduring the want of almost all earthly comforts. At least he ought to be ready for such exigencies—armed for the battle. But suppose, when a man is urged to weigh the matter of personal entrance on the work of foreign missions, he replies, and in truth, too, "Oh, I am impatient of privation; I can not bear burdens." Does this excuse him? Did not God command him to "learn to endure hardness?" "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may *please him* who hath chosen him to be a soldier." 2 Tim. ii., 4. If we are Christ's, one evidence of that fact is that we please not ourselves. Again, if we have never learned



both how to abound and how to suffer want, it is time that we had. We can never learn any sooner. Let us then put ourselves on a course of vigorous self-denial, court hardship as we can possibly bear it; learn to say as St. Augustine, "Oh! how sweet it is to deny ourselves these earthly sweets! how pleasant to forego these temporal pleasures!" and, like Christ, be satisfied, if such be the will of God, not to have where to lay our heads, if we may but find our meat and drink in doing the works of him that sent us, and finish our course with joy. And if we can subdue our impatience and aversion to suffering for Christ, then we shall be ready for any good work in any place. "Let patience have her perfect work."

*Cheerfulness of mind, a habitual buoyancy of spirits, and an elevated frame of feeling, have often been named as of great importance to the foreign missionary.* It is undoubtedly true that some persons, having great natural timidity and a tendency to despondency, and having gracious principles only in a very feeble or languid state, are unfit for usefulness any where, until they shall learn to live nearer to God. But the necessity for cheerfulness is rendered more prominent than it deserves to be, and withal has misrepresentation often connected with it. In the first place, *natural cheerfulness and buoyancy of soul* are not the things required. The cheerfulness that can be relied on is a divine quality. Read Isaiah xl., 29-31, and Zechariah xii., 8. The history of Jeremiah also furnishes sound instruction on this subject. He is appropriately styled the weeping prophet; he began his ministry in the fearfulness of youth; he lived in troublous times; he had great natural timidity; he was scorned by his countrymen; he was persecuted by strangers; he was a prisoner to the enemies of his country; he was filled with sighs, and groans, and tears, and cries of woe. See Jeremiah ix., 1, and xv., 10. Yet it

may be safely questioned whether Elijah or Samuel would have equaled Jeremiah in usefulness had they been placed in his stead. We have an example of usefulness, also, in one who was naturally, morbidly, and habitually despondent, shining with unusual holy splendor in the catalogue of modern missionaries. It is almost needless to say that reference is had to David Brainerd, all whose missionary life was spent in sickness and sadness. Is cheerfulness, then, necessary to usefulness? Nay, has not God forever settled this question by the declaration of the great proto-missionary, Paul, who says: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness, in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart?" Rom. ix., 1, 2. Ought Paul to have waited until he could become merry of heart? Finally, let a man be anointed with the oil of holy gladness, and, however much his natural spirits may give way, he will acquire the divine art of "rejoicing in tribulation." It is hardly to be questioned that the happiness of many in Christian lands would be augmented were they willing to go to the heathen. As they now are, worldliness, selfishness, tedium, and ennui are rotting their bones.

*Some sound knowledge of human nature has often been mentioned, and very correctly, too, as essential to usefulness at home or abroad.* Other things being equal, it is undoubtedly true that he who is the most perfect scholar in this department of nature will be the most useful. To present summarily all the truth on this subject, let it be remarked that there are many posts in the foreign department of Christian effort which do not require any more extended knowledge of men than an ordinary pastoral charge in this land. Again, he who has good sense and a pious heart, and is willing and able to understand and receive the Bible account of man, will soon learn all the great prin-

ciples of human nature, and will readily acquire some skill in dealing with it. The Bible, above all books, gives just ✓ and deep views of human nature. Study the Bible and learn mankind. This thought may encourage us in the business, that human nature is the same in all countries, ages, and grades of society. Supreme selfishness governs ✓ all unrenewed men.

*A capacity for acquiring, with some degree of facility, a knowledge of languages is certainly desirable in all ministers of the Gospel—yea, is ordinarily needful to workmen who need not be ashamed.* Yet it is painfully manifest that there has been a remarkable disposition to give to this matter a weight which it does not deserve. Who ever heard of a man objecting to a residence in France, Italy, St. Petersburg, or Constantinople, because he had not a capacity for acquiring with ease a strange language? None. Let the hope of gain be raised high, let the “clink of mammon’s box” be heard, and men will go any where; will, in defiance of dullness of mind, in a short time learn to speak fluently of gold and silver and trade. Just so ought it to be in the missionary cause. Besides, the most difficult languages have been already mastered; and the greatest difficulties in most languages have been overcome. Moreover, many of the languages where missionaries are now wanted are learned with great facility. Some missionaries have learned to preach in a heathen language in a single year, and some in even a shorter time. So that, while it is true the greater our capacity for any valuable acquisition, the better, yet the way is as open on the score of language as a man of good sense and deep piety need desire it to be. Indeed, in some of the schools, as among the aborigines of America, the plain English itself is taught. So that there can be no insurmountable difficulty.



*So much of a calculating mind as can lay a judicious plan, and prosecute it for years or for life ; providing, at the same time, against sudden reverses and unexpected difficulties, is a desirable quality in any man who would make his life and labors very useful in any place or manner.* Of course, the foreign missionary would reap the full advantage of such a mind. But then let us remember that the importance and influence of this consideration can be modified almost indefinitely. If a man is to be at the head of an entire mission ; is to go to places and people of a peculiar character ; or is in any way to be very delicately situated or very highly responsible, then he ought to be a wise, calculating man. But it is an exceedingly small number of men who can be leaders, or unusually responsible in affairs of Church or State, at home or abroad. And the number of leaders in the missionary enterprise does not increase in proportion to the enlargement of operations.

*This suggests the very important remark that a willingness to obey, to be second, yea, to take the very lowest place assigned us by our brethren, is essential to our usefulness in a foreign mission.* Pride, ambition, self-conceit, self-will, and all kindred sentiments, must be mortified, if we would be fully prepared for this work. No man can well command who knows not how to obey ; no man can well direct who has not himself submitted to direction. Subordination, yea, even co-ordination, require that lowliness reign in the heart and mind. Dr. Milne offered to go as a servant to the other missionaries.

*An ability or tact in adapting one's self to occasions, so as to be kept from fatal surprises, is of great value to any minister, and in some foreign stations incalculably so.* Yet at many stations things seem to have entered such a regular channel, and have assumed such a common-

place character, that men of great resources would find but little demand for their vast versatility of powers. It is, then, on this subject, as it is in reference to the ministry at home, viz., that while there is at some places scope for the exercise of the greatest powers and resources, there is also at other places room enough for talents and powers of slow action and of rather tedious mediocrity.

*Much has been said of the importance of ardent love to the cause of missions as a qualification for the work.* Doubtless he who does not ardently love the cause will do it less disservice by remaining at home than by going abroad. For the clearing of this matter, let a few things be said. First, love to the cause of missions is nothing but love to souls and to Jesus Christ, shown in a particular way. Of course, just in proportion as a man loves souls and the Saviour will he love the cause of missions. Then, he who loves not the cause of missions at all, loves not men or Christ at all; and he who loves not the cause of missions ardently, loves not his race or the Redeemer ardently. Of course, he who loves not the cause of missions ardently is not fit to be a minister in any place or country. And the piety of any man is nothing worth, if it do not lead him to yearn, with bowels of tender compassion, toward the dying heathen. Besides, if you have not ardent love to the cause of missions, it is your crime, your sin, and not your excuse. Every man is verily guilty concerning his brethren—is truly condemned by the law of love—who does not earnestly pray and labor for the period to arrive when “the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days.” Isa. xxx., 26.

*Great personal industry is a quality of indispensable requisition in a foreign missionary.* If men will creep, and crawl, and lounge, and rust, and rot, let them stay at

home; let them not go to bring odium and death on Christian precepts in heathen countries by an example of slothfulness. Sleeping dogs may as well be kept in the house as put on the watch. It is unwise in the least to rely on their vigilance. It is better to have none than such. Up to this day it is true that slothful habits, or even the lack of great personal industry, have clothed their subjects with amazing guilt, and have brought a harvest of death on souls. None but the Infinite One can tell what hundreds and thousands are now suffering in the world of woe on account of this dreadful sin. And if industry be important at home, it is still more so, if possible, to him who goes abroad. To be ever on the alert, watching for opportunities of usefulness, making every hour of the day advance the cause, is the only way to make a life eminently useful at home or abroad, but especially abroad. Well prepared as Henry Martyn himself was for foreign labors, even he lost the best opportunity for usefulness which he had for months in India, as he tells us, and simply for want of giving good heed. Let no man comfort himself and sit down quietly, thinking himself not called on to engage in foreign missions because he has not industrious habits. If he has them not, he is guilty, and will continue guilty until he shall acquire them. Any *minister* without such habits is pre-eminently guilty, be his station and talents what they may.

*It is also true that no man ought to be sent by the Church on a foreign mission who feels an unconquerable unwillingness to go.* And yet this remark needs explanation. Jonah was called to go on a foreign mission, even to Nineveh, yet was he exceedingly unwilling to go. But God made him willing before he left off chastening him. The unwillingness referred to is rather a hinderance to the Church in sending us, than an evidence that we are not



called. So of other disqualifications alluded to in this chapter—they may often hinder the Church from sending the person in whom they are found to the heathen, while they furnish him with no excuse for not going. By self-discipline, watchfulness, and grace, he ought to rid himself of them. No man is excusable for not possessing in a good degree every requisite moral qualification for the missionary work. Even a holy and great prophet once heard the solemn inquiry and reproof, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” 1 Kings xix., 9, 13. A man may feel an aversion to any plain duty, yet that aversion does not excuse, but it rather condemns him. If the path of duty is otherwise plain, let it be our constant aim to be willing to be, to do, or to suffer any thing for Christ’s sake, and that joyfully. The more willing, the better.

It is of vast importance that the whole Church of God, but especially ministers, and most especially foreign ministers, should cultivate strong faith in God; and, in particular, a firm belief in all the promises respecting the final conversion of the world. It was only “by faith Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went.” Heb. xi., 8. It was only by faith that Paul “went to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that should befall him there, save that the Holy Ghost witnessed in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions did abide him.” Acts xx., 22, 23. A foreign missionary, without lively faith and hope in God, would be, even as to this world, in a worse state than a ship without helm or anchor. By a careful perusal of Scripture prophecy and promise, and by hearty prayer to God, the missionary must also settle it unwaveringly in his mind that Jesus Christ shall have the heathen for his heritage, and every part of the earth for a possession. The Scriptures will also fully justify the firm belief that the day of the Lord draweth nigh, and that the year of his redeemed is

not far distant. A firm belief of this will mightily encourage and animate him. Without strong faith on these subjects, the foreign laborer will be but a reed shaken with the wind, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

So much on the score of qualification it was right to state. Perhaps every important point has been noticed, so far as qualification for this work is to be added to qualification for the ministry in general. If we have not these qualities, or any of them in a sufficient degree, yet if we can and shall by any means acquire them, then our way is clear.

*In ascertaining a call to the field of foreign labor, reference must undoubtedly be had to the leadings and actings of God's wonderful providence.* These acts of Providence, in addition to those which lead us into the ministry, are very numerous. When favorable, they generally relate to the fact and manner of bringing the subject of missions before the mind; riddance from the duties and embarrassments created by the indispensable obligations of justice, faith, mercy, or filial piety, and provision for our maintenance while in the field of foreign labor. These and kindred topics are the chief matters which receive direction from God's providence; and, if there be no other acts of God's government of an opposite nature, his will may be esteemed to be clearly and conclusively expressed.

*So much of the matter of a call to a foreign field as relates to the direct agency of the Holy Spirit of God on the heart is perhaps of more difficult explication.* It is enough, however, to state that, over and above the bestowment of qualities of mind and heart necessary to constitute a call to the ministry in general, added to the qualities spoken of in this chapter, there is but little left for special notice. Yet we may not omit mentioning a frequent, and

often involuntary, drawing of the mind to the great subject of missions, the awakening of a lively interest in their success, the granting of the spirit of special prayer for their increase and prosperity, and the holding up to the eye of the mind some of the moral grandeur and captivating beauty of the work, so as to make it appear any thing else than "a dull and melancholy exile." For our comfort and the divine glory, however, let it be said that "the meek God will guide in judgment" on this as on all other matters; and that, "if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not."

Truth requires the statement that persons have gone on foreign missions who were certainly never called to that work. As error, therefore, may be committed, let each one be cautious and well count the cost, "lest, haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish." Luke xiv., 29, 30. It is necessary, for the comfort of the honest inquirer and for the glory of God, that it be distinctly stated that perhaps all who have erred in going abroad have been influenced by some wrong motive, or some want of reflection, as they themselves *might* have learned, if they had with sufficient care examined the whole matter. Let it also be distinctly stated, that there is alarming ground of fears that many who are called to the foreign field disobey the call and remain at home. These fears are based upon several general views of things.

Men who have any spiritual discernment do lament that piety is at a very low ebb in the Church and in the ministry, at our colleges and seminaries, and every where else. Now this is the very state of things in which we would expect the detainure of some at home who ought to go abroad. When piety is low, those fields of labor that are



pleasant to the pride, or slothfulness, or voluptuousness, or any other sinful quality of man, will be sought after; while those demanding much self-denial will be compelled to call long and loud before they will obtain a candid, practical hearing.

Again, there are in the United States between nine and eleven thousand educated evangelical ministers. We have also a population not exceeding forty millions of souls. Can it be supposed that God has called so many to labor here, and so few elsewhere, while manifestly the door is set wide open in many countries for preaching the Word, for distributing the Holy Scriptures and religious tracts, and for establishing schools for Christian instruction? Are not probabilities fearfully against the present state of things among us? We have a well-educated minister for every three thousand souls, while the heathen, to whom we have inviting access, have scarcely a minister to every million of their population. What do these things mean?

Again, there is a fearful and amazing apathy among the churches and clergy of evangelical denominations. Why is this? May it not be because of the fact that in so many remaining at home we run contrary to the good pleasure of God, and he has paralyzed us? And now the American Church may say, "From the uttermost parts of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me." Isa. xxiv., 16. The army of Gideon must be reduced from thirty-two thousand to three hundred, before he can conquer. The body of Christ will not have sound health until it takes more exercise, and walks and does not faint, and runs and is not weary, and bears glad tidings of salvation over mountains and billows to the ends of the earth. Many like things might be said.

Brethren, let this subject come home with all its force.

Whatever may be our conduct now, we shall be compelled to meet this matter fairly and fully at the bar of God. Open your ears, and hear the distant, though distinct and deafening cry, coming from hundreds of millions of earth's population, as they are sinking to an eternal hell, and saying: "Oh! give us a book and send us a teacher that can tell us how our immortality may prove a blessing, our existence tolerable."

Look up to the throne above, and see the Mediator of the new covenant kindly yet authoritatively bowing to us, and saying: "By these hands and these feet, and this side that did bleed, by all my bloody sweat in the garden, by all my grace in your personal salvation, by all my love and authority as Head of the Church, I command, I beseech you, that ye speedily go into *all the world*, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*." Can we, will we, dare we, let more than twenty-five millions from unevangelized nations go into eternity every year, without unparalleled efforts to save them from the burning lake? "Who will go for us?"

Are there no ministers of the sanctuary whose usefulness would be greatly increased by leaving their people and their country, and becoming missionaries to the heathen? How many, alas! are content with a limited sphere of labor, when kingdoms and empires lie in utter destitution! Energies are exhausted upon trifles, talents are buried, and men who might be exceedingly useful are voluntarily incarcerated. Those who are commanded to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," must have their message first proclaimed to themselves. The missionary work demands the most exalted talent and extensive learning; and consequently the arguments employed for remaining at home are the very ones which render more imperative the duty of going

abroad. It is true the work can accommodate itself to every order of talent and acquirement, and so can the highest stations in Christian lands; but the result in both cases will be alike. The duty of acquiring languages, translating, writing, instructing on all subjects, answering all questions, reasoning, devising facilities, managing events, in many cases practicing medicine, and preaching to different classes, often in different languages, will soon convince those who make the trial that none can be too well qualified for labors among the heathen. I speak not to discourage any, but to correct the opinions of some. None need despair of usefulness. All who feel constrained by the love of Christ should enlist in this service; but the last objection that ought to be conceived is that the minds of many are so vigorous and richly furnished that the most difficult project of earth, opposed by all the forces of hell, is not sufficient to employ their powers.

Oh! that He, "from whom all blessings flow," would pour down his Spirit upon us, anointing us afresh with an unction that shall abide, and enable us all joyfully to go where we are sent, and to run whither we are called, so that by any means we may "speed the flight of the angel who has the everlasting Gospel to preach unto the nations."



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE DUTY OF AMERICANS.

GREAT events are sometimes found in clusters. In A.D. 1459 the art of printing was invented. Then came the revival of letters under the patronage of the family of Medici, whose illustrious founder departed this life A.D. 1464. Then followed the discovery of America in 1492. Soon we find trade opened with the East Indies around the Cape of Good Hope in 1497. Then came the glorious Reformation from Popery, which began in 1514. About the same time took place the great improvement in navigation, by the reduction of its principles to a science, and through the greatly increased knowledge of the mariner's compass. ✓ These six events, pregnant with incalculably beneficent results, were crowded together in the narrow space of little more than half a century, and, mutually conspiring for good, began to break the slumbers and unrivet the fetters of a world which during a thousand years had never awaked but to wretchedness, or to some wild exploit of a maddening fanaticism.

The character and circumstances of the first settlers of this country were suited to awaken the expectation that a race of useful men was about to appear. "God sifted ✓ kingdoms that he might get the choicest wheat to sow in this boundless plantation." The best of the Puritans, the Huguenots, and the orthodox of Holland, mightily shaped the course of events in the New World for a long time. The absence of the effeminating habits and luxuries of the Old World, the constant perils and appalling hardships of

the first settlers required energy, patience, courage, virtue. To live without a high purpose was to be destitute of the common currency of the country.

The free institutions of our country are favorable to the development of vigorous character. In this land, whosoever will may aspire, and to what he will. Many of the best scholars and most honored citizens are virtually self-made men. Let any sober youth design to belt the globe with a hallowed influence, and, if life be spared, it may be done. Samuel J. Mills "formed a purpose to feel and act efficiently for more than two thirds of the human race, never baptized by the Christian name;" and he executed his purpose, though he numbered on earth less than a moiety of the three score and ten years allotted to mortals.

The simplicity of our religious institutions also promises good. We are not required to maintain a lordly priesthood of scandalous life. Every Church and State establishment is an incubus on the best feelings and mightiest energies of all who fall under its hated power. It is the great upas-tree, whose leaves and blossoms and very shadow have scattered death and blight over many fine countries.

The people of the United States are said annually to increase in wealth by thousands of millions. And we have people of both sexes fitted to go on the noblest enterprises.

About a century and a half ago a little company of six hundred souls began to send messengers of salvation to the tribes on Greenland's icy mountains, and to the besotted East Indians, and to the degraded negroes of Africa and of the West Indies. The nation of Greenlanders has long been Christian. Thirty years ago there were not two hundred unbaptized persons among their six thousand souls. More than sixty thousand converts now lift their hands in adoring praise to the God who put it into the heart of the Moravians to undertake their pious work. Meantime, the

augmented wealth of this missionary body threatens to prove their greatest bane.

From the united influence of moral and physical causes, American character is distinguished for invention, for resources, and for facile adaptation to pressing exigencies.

The Scripture has called our attention to a commercial people as likely to act a leading part in blessing the world. Isa. lx., 9. Commerce, christianized in its conduct and objects, will doubtless bear a conspicuous part in filling the world with the knowledge of God. Just before he laid aside his armor, Morrison, of China, thus wrote to the author: "I beseech you, if you have influence among the opulent Christians of America, to consider the practicability of a Bible ship to navigate the shores of Eastern Asia. If science, and discovery, and luxury, and commerce have their ships sailing and visiting every shore, why should it be thought strange that the Christian should also have his ships to convey to man the written mandate of his Maker? the message of mercy from the Saviour of the world, who has issued the command to 'go and disciple all nations.' They can not go unless sent, and they can not be sent to some places without ships on purpose." 'Tis a pleasing fact that already some ships are abroad on these errands of mercy.

In the judgment of some great and impartial men, there is often in American character a peculiar fitness for compassing difficult enterprisés. Dr. Philip, of South Africa, said: "So far as I have had the means of judging, I believe, generally speaking, that the American missionaries are, in some important respects, superior to our own." In a letter to Dr. Milnor, Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta, said: "The missionaries from America are filling India, Ceylon, and Burmah. They seem able, well-informed, pious, devoted, self-denying men, with little or no party spirit. If



they proceed as they do, and England is as tardy as she now is in sending out missionaries, America will convert the world.

“I have been much struck with the superior talents and piety of those whom I have seen. The immense population of your United States, their vigor of intellect, their simplicity of manners, appear to mark them out for great things in the diffusive work of the Gospel of our Lord.”

Is all this distinction conferred upon us only that we may be pre-eminently guilty? Oh, that we may occupy till He come!

The elder President Edwards argued at some length that the latter-day glory will probably begin in America, and that the waters of the sanctuary would flow from west to east, agreeably to the vision of Ezekiel. Similar views of the destiny of America have been expressed by others.

Edmund Burke, in his speech on conciliation with America (March 22, 1775), speaking of American enterprise, wealth, and character, says: “While we follow these among the tumbling mountains of ice, and behold them penetrating to the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson’s Bay and Davis’s Strait, while we are looking for them beneath the arctic circle, we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold—that they are at the antipodes, and engaged under the frozen serpent of the South. Falkland Island, which seemed too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, is but a stage and resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both the poles. We know that while some of them draw the line and strike the harpoon on the coast of Africa, others run the longitude and pursue the gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No cli-

mate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the activity of France, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hard industry to the extent to which it has been pushed by this recent people—a people who are still, as it were, in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood. . . . The colonies emigrated from the mother-country when the predominant part of English character was adoration of freedom; and they took this bias and direction the moment they left British ports. . . . Religion, always a principle of energy, in this new people is in no way worn out or impaired. The people are Protestants. . . . And the religion most prevalent in the Northern Colonies is the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. . . . The colonists left England when this spirit was high, and in the emigrants was highest of all. . . . Permit me to add another circumstance. I mean the education of these people.”

The eloquent James Douglas, of Scotland, honored among the liberal of all lands, says: “America is to modern Europe what its western colonies were to Greece—the land of aspirations and dreams—the country of daring enterprise, and the asylum of misfortune, which receives alike the exile and the adventurer, the discontented and the aspiring; and promises to all a freer life and a fresher nature. The European emigrant might believe himself as one transported to a new world, governed by new laws, and finds himself raised in the scale of being—the pauper is maintained by his own labor, the hired laborer works on his own account, and the tenant is changed into a proprietor. . . . The world has not witnessed an emigration like that taking place to America—so extensive in its range, so immeasurable in its consequences—since the dispersion of mankind; or, perhaps, since the barbarians broke into the

empire. . . . A moral influence is withdrawing their subjects from the old and worn-out governments of Europe, and hurrying them across the Atlantic to participate in the renovated youth of the new republic of the West; and hordes of emigrants are continually swarming off, as ceaseless in their passage, and crowded and unreturning, as the travelers to eternity. Even those who are forced to remain behind feel a melancholy restlessness; like a bird, ✓ whose wing is crippled at the season of migration. Every change in America has occasioned a corresponding change in Europe; the discovery of it overturned the systems of the ancients, and gave a new face to adventure and to knowledge; the opening of its mines produced a revolution in property; and the independence of the United States overturned the monarchy of France, and set fire to a train which has not yet fully exploded. At every expansion of American influence, the older countries are destined to undergo new changes. . . . The American States will every year exert a wider sway over the minds of men, and hold out to them a more illustrious example of prosperity and freedom. In little more than a century the United States must contain a population ten times greater than has ever yet been animated by the spirit and energy of a free government; ✓ and in less than a century and a half the New World will not be able to contain its inhabitants, but will pour them forth upon the shores of less civilized nations, till the earth is subdued to knowledge, and filled with the abodes of free and civilized men. But the spirit and imitation of American freedom will spread still more rapidly and widely than its power.

“No force can crush the sympathy that already exists and is continually augmenting between Europe and the New World. The eyes of the oppressed are even now turning wistfully to the land of freedom, and the kings of the Con-



continent already regard with awe and disquietude the new Rome rising in the West; the foreshadows of whose greatness, yet to be, are extending dark and heavy over their dominions and obscuring the lustre of their thrones."

The ancients seem to have had an expectation of what has actually happened in modern times. In the *Medea* of Seneca, he says:

"Venient annis  
Sæcula seris, quibus Oceanus  
Vincula rerum laxet, et ingens  
Pateat tellus, Typhisque novos  
Detegat orbes, nec sit terris  
Ultima Thule."

The posture of affairs being such as has been described, our nation growing with unexampled rapidity in numbers, wealth, and power, what shall employ us? When other nations have gained power, they have employed themselves in making conquests, which ultimately proved their ruin. Or they have plunged themselves into long and bloody wars; but may we not hope that the time is near at hand when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more?" Isa. ii., 4.

In many countries, heathen and Catholic, the number of holidays and excessive taxation keep the people poor and broken in spirit, but the majority of the people of these States will hardly consent to consume time and substance in the fooleries of a sottish superstition. Once the spirit of chivalry, and bloodshed, and martyrdom, and fanaticism, strangely combined to enlist mighty potentates for the rescue of the Holy Land. Whether a plodding and practical people could ever be summoned to a distant shore on some wild crusade, there to perish of plague, to burn in

fever and die in battle, is not gravely problematical. There was a period when men were willing to spend all the harvest-time of life in culling from heaps of rubbish a few quaint sentences, and puerile antitheses, and scholastic dogmas; then writing a book, and bidding the world farewell. But may we not hope that such time shall be no longer? Nor can you persuade the millions of this Union innocuously to spend their time, "doing nothing else but to hear and to tell some new thing." Acts xvii., 21. Our young men can not be induced to consume the vigor of youth and their patrimonial substance in making the ascent of the rugged hills of science and literature, rewarded only with the privilege of plucking by the way some flower of rhetoric, or with the hope of seeing at the end of their toils some new planet; and there, far above the clouds of popular ignorance and vulgar prejudice, sitting down on a barren rock, and shining in melancholy inutility and bleak loneliness. Americans will *do* something. Something great for good or for evil. Forbid them to extend the conquests of benevolence—to purify the haunts of vice—to reform the habitations of cruelty—hold them back from a world's conversion, and soon the excess of wealth will breed luxury, corruption, and devotion to shows and games and sensuality. The national mind under deep-toned excitement, the national talent under high cultivation, the learned professions crowded to excess, political contests waxing more and more fierce; faction, that common grave of republics, will begin her work of death—riots will abound—disunion will hasten on—the tocsin of civil war will send a terrible blast to every fireside, and the withering curse of Meroz will make us to consume away like the fat of lambs.

To show the practical bearing of all this on the present generation, it may be stated that we have constantly multiplying proofs that the harvest of the earth is ripening

apace. Physical strength and moral power—in other words, numbers on the one part, and justice, truth, and right on the other—never before, as now, thundered forth their resistless demands in the halls of legislators and the cabinets of kings. Men once wrapped in reckless stupidity, now collect in little groups or dignified assemblies to discourse on the state of empires, the balance of power, the rights of man. All orders of men, from the meek disciple of the despised Nazarene to the vile Atheist, are industriously wielding the power of speech and the greater power of the press in propagating their opinions. Political sagacity once might venture to foretell the course of events for a century to come, but of late all discerning statesmen are “lying prophets.” Their very wisdom misleads them. In 1789, Jay said: “The navigation of the Mississippi will not for thirty years become an object of importance.” In 1826, Canning pronounced the scheme of “abolishing slavery in the British Colonies impracticable.” Both truth and error are becoming fully organized. Old systems of false religion are becoming intolerable, and sinking into decrepitude. “Now, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” Heb. viii., 13. The Man of Sin, the false prophet, and the champions of idolatry are perplexed with fear of change. While the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience never maddened some minds to a higher frenzy by the sorcery of sin, yet that Spirit which maketh of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, since the days of the apostles, never gave us men of more might or valor or success than some who adorn and bless this age. Why, then, are matters in this posture? and why do all these facilities and qualities so far concentrate in America? Why has God so highly exalted both our state and our hopes? What do these things teach but that THE CHURCH IN THESE UNITED STATES OUGHT TO REGARD



HERSELF AS CALLED TO BEAR A PROMINENT PART IN THE WORK OF CONVERTING THE WORLD UNTO GOD ?

A right view of such truth ought greatly to humble us, as well as to enkindle within us a deathless flame of pure zeal. Let our devotion in its purity excel that of the Jesuits in their infatuation. In his History of China, Samedo quotes the words of one of the Chinese missionaries : " After my return to Europe, when my intention of seeking laborers for this vineyard was divulged, immediately there were so many candidates that there is scarcely a province of our society from which I have not received many letters from several fathers, not only offering themselves, but earnestly requesting me to accept them as soldiers in this enterprise. As if the trouble and pains of these long and dangerous voyages, and the persecutions so certainly to be undergone, were as nothing to this undertaking. In Portugal, from the two colleges of Coimbra and Ebona alone, I had a list of ninety persons, so desirous to labor in this mission that many of them have sent to me very long letters, all written and signed *with their own blood*. Witnessing in this manner that they had a holy courage that could despise the threats of martyrdom ; offering cheerfully to the Lord that little blood, as a testimony of the great desire they had to shed it for his sake."

The author of the Spirit of Laws says : " Besides the common object, which all governments have, of supporting themselves, each of them has besides a peculiar one." Ancient Egypt chiefly sought to attain glory and splendor ; Sparta, to rear soldiers ; Tyre and Carthage, to secure a vast commerce ; Rome, to be mistress of the world. In modern times, Russia seeks aggrandizement ; France, glory ; Spain, superstition ; and England, wealth. The peculiar object of America *ought* to be to maintain at home the spirit of justice, moderation, peace, and piety, and to endeavor to be

a blessing to mankind by her example, her sanctified literature, her missionary zeal, her diffusive benevolence. The highest destiny any people can attain is to be a blessing to other nations.

What *we* do, we must do quickly. Eternity is just at hand. Time—

“That stuff that life is made of,  
And which when lost is never lost alone,  
Because it carries souls upon its wings,”

will soon be gone forever. Quit you like men.

P

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE RELATIONS OF AMERICA TO OTHER LANDS.

NONE of us liveth unto himself. The principle here stated is as applicable to nations as to persons. Isolation is neither a duty nor a blessing.

To all nations America owes the offices of friendship and good neighborhood. To some she manifestly owes more.

In Asia, British Christians seem to have a great work devolved upon them. Yet even there our people are in some places less regarded as enemies and oppressors than are subjects of the British crown. American missions in that country have had so remarkable success as to be a wonder to the religious world.

In China, too, the door is wide open. In that empire are found at least two fifths of the population of the globe.

Nor is it possible longer to avert our eyes from Japan, where God is effecting such wonders as to astonish all men who think of the mighty and rapid changes there going on.

But the churches of America sustain *peculiar* relations to some of the peoples upon earth. Of these some are heathen and some papal. Some are on this continent, and some on each of the other continents.

Among Roman Catholics abroad we owe a special debt to the down-trodden of Ireland. From that land came many of our forefathers. The terrible famine that wasted that land in 1847 and 1848, gave to our people an opportunity of showing our regard for them in a substantial manner. The result has been the winning of their confi-



dence in a very high degree. There seems to be something very generous in the character of the Irish. They are very grateful for favors. They also seem to have an instinctive love of liberty; and although for a long time they have been degraded by the superstitions of Rome, and have very confused notions of the true nature of liberty, yet all this may be accounted for in a way that would encourage us to labor assiduously for their good.

Nor do our peculiar relations to France permit us to be indifferent to her spiritual interests. She is a great nation, with a population of from thirty to forty millions of souls. Through nearly all her dependencies the light of science pours forth its rays from her splendid metropolis. Yet most of her people know not the way of life. And although at times the door seems closed to evangelical labors in France, yet frequently it is open. There was once a great Reformed Church in France, with one large national Synod, sixteen provincial Synods, and a great body of as able men as have in modern times borne witness for the truth. And the blood of the slaughtered Huguenots calls aloud to us to preach Christ in the places where once the truth was proclaimed with great power. Some time since one of our countrymen uttered these sentiments: "*There is necessity for a mission to France.* Christianity is almost extinct. The Sabbath, to the nation, as such, is abolished. It furnishes neither sacred rest, nor religious teaching, nor true devotion. The king reviews his troops, artificers and tradesmen ply their business, theatres are thronged, mountebanks harvest their gains, music resounds at the hotels, and the whole land is overspread with vice and profanation. . . . The whole population of France may be divided into *three classes*: the infidel, the superstitious, and the inquiring. The thinking portion settle into a *negligent infidelity*. . . . *The superstitious*, with whom may be classed the ignorant

and the interested, are almost the only votaries left to popery in France. The *inquiring* constitute, happily, a considerable party. . . . But there are none to lead them in the way of life! A handful of pious ministers among thirty millions of the French leave the people almost as sheep without a shepherd. Perhaps greater necessity for missionary labor can hardly be found on earth.

*"The encouragements at this time are peculiar. Every thing is ready. The Holy Bible and admirable tracts are already in the language of the country, and may be had in any quantities from existing societies. The people are distinguished for inquisitiveness, intelligence, and temperance. There is a peculiar respect and fondness for Americans. The language is almost universally understood among the intelligent classes in Europe. . . . Perhaps no nation is in so open and accessible a state as the French. Perfect toleration now exists in France. . . . Under the present dynasty, orderly assemblies, in any number, may collect to hear Protestant ministers of every kind and nation. Providence thus calls upon the friends of truth, both by the extreme necessities and the peculiar encouragements of the case, to rise and act. If Providence ever speaks intelligibly, it does so in this case. God prepared the world for the introduction of Christianity by a universal peace and an almost universal language. He prepared it for the glorious Reformation by the revival of letters, the bestowment of the art of printing, etc. He prepared the Sandwich Islands for the arrival and labor of the missionaries by the renunciation of idolatry. He has prepared France! If we now neglect to scatter the holy seed, if we turn a deaf ear to so intelligible a call, if we look coldly on thirty millions of people famishing for the truth, if we turn to sloth and covetousness, and forget the vows of our consecration, God will require it!*

*"We must act promptly.* There is no security for the continuance of the present facilities.

*"Special obligation rests upon us as Americans.* We, more than the Christians of any other nation, are bound to remember France. The special friendship with which Americans are received in France, but chiefly our example in government, impose upon us unequal obligations."

Remarks somewhat similar are applicable to the population of Central and South America. The empire of Brazil, and the nascent commonwealths of those regions, will by degrees work out the problem of political and personal freedom, civil and religious. From the Gulf of Mexico to the Terra del Fuego, we have brethren more willing to listen to the truth from our lips than from the mouth of any European who is likely soon to publish it among them. In his day Samuel J. Mills said: "Let not the American churches forget that more than one quarter of the circumference of the globe, lying immediately under their eye, is little less than an extended dungeon, where forty millions of immortal beings are in the bond of iniquity and the gall of bitterness." The number is much greater now.

Our relation to the continent of Africa is very peculiar. Earth contains no nation that is under so many obligations, or has so much ability to be a blessing to that blood-stained land, as the people of the United States. Our intimate acquaintance with the genius of the people, and the colonies we have planted, covering many leagues of their coast, together with numerous other advantages, imperatively summon us to the blessed work of evangelizing the peeled and scattered tribes of Africa. Dr. Philip, who lived in Africa, and was to us an impartial witness, said: "So far as our plans for the future improvement of Africa are concerned, I regard the new colony of Liberia as full



of promise to this unhappy continent. Half a dozen such colonies, conducted on Christian principles, might be the means, under the divine blessing, of regenerating this degraded quarter of the globe. Every prospective measure for the improvement of Africa must have in it the seminal principles of good government; and no better plan can be devised for laying the foundations of Christian governments than that which this new settlement presents." In another place, the same writer, speaking of "the best mode of evangelizing and civilizing Africa," says: "The whole of Mr. Mills' memoirs (which I have perused at one sitting) convinces me that from your intercourse with the native tribes of America, or some other cause, that you have much more enlarged views on this subject than are, generally speaking, to be found in England. But, however far you may have got before my countrymen on this point, you will not be displeased to find that the fruit of fourteen years' experience which I have had in Africa, goes to confirm all the views of your enlightened and lamented countryman."

Whenever Africa is mentioned as a field for missionary effort, the intelligent will not forget that already many of our missionaries have fallen victims to the diseases of that country. This fact is as sad as it is undeniable; and, lest it should have undue influence over the minds of some, it may be well to say that, besides those promises which relate to all the world, and which have as much and as just application to Africa as to Europe, Asia, or America, there are others which undoubtedly specify and particularize Africa as the seat of glorious operations of divine grace. Thus in the eighty-seventh Psalm it is said: "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon

to them that know me: Behold, Philistia and Tyre, with ETHIOPIA; this man was born there. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her." Ver. 2-5. In this remarkable passage, the same things are promised to Ethiopia as are promised to Zion, viz., that it should partake of the regenerating influences of God's Spirit. The whole of the eighteenth chapter of Isaiah contains one of the most remarkable predictions in the Bible. For a long time this prophecy was supposed to have been fulfilled; but that interpretation is now generally given up. Indeed, there is no past period of history to which the seventh verse can with any propriety be referred. Some refer the chapter to the destruction of Antichrist and the restoration of the Jews. But this is in violation of some sober rules of interpretation. If we make the passage refer to the vast continent of Africa, as yet to be converted through the evangelical labors of a "Christian nation of great maritime power and influence," then well-nigh every expression is plain and striking, and consistent with the whole. Surely if ever a nation was "scattered and peeled," if ever there was a "people terrible from the beginning, a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers (or navigation) have spoiled," it was Africa. This people, be they who they may, are yet to bring presents unto the Lord. The land lieth also beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, reckoning from Judea. Without expressing any high confidence in this interpretation, or any other, respecting unfulfilled prophecies, it is not extravagant to say there is more to favor this than any view which has perhaps been suggested. Several other Scriptures might be referred to in this discussion; but have we not examined passages enough to allow our adoption of the words of the Psalmist in Psalm lxviii., 31, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God?" It is true that the word Ethiopia, used in the Script-

ures, had frequently a definite meaning, designating the particular country which lay to the northeast and the southwest of the Red Sea. Yet it is generally admitted also to have included the vast unknown region to the southeast and south of Egypt, and from this actual location, and its relations to the land of the prophets, arose its use to signify that great country, occupied by a people of a different skin (Jer. xiii., 23) from others, and inhabiting the vast continent of Africa. So far, therefore, from that dark continent being overlooked in the visions of glorious prophecy, there is a remarkable prominence given to it. Neither let it be forgotten that among the early triumphs of redemption, sacred story omits not to mention Ethiopia. Acts viii., 27. And if tradition and uninspired history may be relied on, the Gospel has never had more glorious success any where than in Ethiopia proper, and in other parts of Africa.

In view of these things, how ought the Christians of America to regard the painful tidings respecting our missionaries to Africa? Do they make void the promises of God respecting that land of darkness? Do they declare that the habitations of cruelty must be undisturbed? or that we are too soon on the field of battle? Surely they teach no such things. But these dealings of the Lord with us do seem to be intended : 1. To try us, that we may know what manner of spirit we are of, and see what is in us. There has long been much said and little done among us for Africa. We have abounded in professions and speeches touching that "nation scattered and peeled." From one end of the land to the other, from our halls of National Legislation to our most obscure assemblies, orators have consumed their energies in telling how we ought to feel and act toward Africa. Every pulpit in the land has had its champion for the evangelization of Africa. At last the churches of this country by a great effort caused their zeal



to rise so high as to send some of their number to do the work of the Lord in Africa. If God takes them away, we may see how much earnestness there is among us, how much faith we have in the promises, and how much sincerity there was in our avowed love to the people of that land. In many parts of the world, four out of five of all the strange merchants who attempt to remain two successive years, die before the end of the second year; and yet how soon are all such vacancies filled up. What port is so dismal through disease and death that it has not its full quota of merchants? Now these merchants by their conduct prove themselves to be *sincere* in desiring wealth by the trade of such ports. In like manner God would let us see whether we are *sincere* in seeking not to acquire, but to communicate the true riches to dying millions. All our churches profess to feel much for Africa. Now let us see if they are *sincere*, or whether it is mere talk.

2. Our intercourse with Africa, until the abolition of the slave-trade, was marked with an immense and horrible waste of human life to the inhabitants of that continent; and therefore, to remind us of our misdeeds, to humble us before God, and to bring us to deep and genuine repentance for our sins, these things may be permitted to occur. That neither this nation nor Great Britain will be honored in the evangelization of Africa until there is more humility—more profound self-abasement—more thorough and general repentance among American and British Christians for the wrongs inflicted on that continent, is, to say the least, probable. Such occurrences as the sudden removal of our missionaries, ought to make us feel as the sons of Leah when in trouble in Egypt: “We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress come upon us.” Gen. xlii., 21. And

afterward, when in still greater distress, Judah, as a mouth for the rest, said: "How shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants." Gen. xliv., 16. Some such views do seem just. Let us sit down in the dust and cry: "Deliver us from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of our salvation; then will we teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Then we will at least be in a more fit state to bear glad tidings to the land of blood and cruelty.

3. There is reason to fear that as yet there has been but little fervent united prayer for Africa. Some of the Presbyterians have probably prayed for the Presbyterian missionaries; and some of the Methodists have prayed for the Methodist missionaries. But when did the churches of America ever *heartily* or even *formally* unite in imploring God's blessing on *all evangelical missions* in Africa? Whether it be not high time for all missionary societies to make a united call on the churches to observe a day of fasting, of humiliation, of confession, of searching Jerusalem with candles, and of supplication in reference to Africa, is worthy of deliberation. Prayer is the best means of doing good. It is essential to the success of missions.

4. As the continent to be evangelized is very extensive and vastly populous, presenting mighty obstacles to our progress—in fine, as the work to be done is incalculably great, the course that God in his holy providence is pursuing toward us is, perhaps, the only one that would open our eyes to the inestimable worth of the prize for which we contend. Let a few scores of holy men be offered upon the sacrifice and service of the Church's faith in behalf of Africa, and we can point to their bones and say: "By the grace of God were these left here, and by the same grace will we leave similar monuments of our zeal and love on every cape and at the head of every inlet on Africa's

coast; yea, we will whiten her shores with our bones ere we will consent to let her alone in sin and death." Let us adopt the words of Melville Cox, words that can not be surpassed in solemnity, in interest, and in holy wisdom by those of any uninspired mortal: "Let not Africa be given up, though thousands fall." The young and lovely Mrs. Jane Wilson, whose bones lie a thousand miles in the interior of Africa, sent to her widowed mother and only sister this message: "I am glad I came to this land;" then kissed her babe and died.

5. The Lord, by taking to heaven those who are prepared to die, does them a great kindness. "It is better to depart and be with Christ," than to have even Paul's gifts and graces and success on earth. Of course it is better than to be a modern missionary in Western Africa. "We mourn not as those that have no hope." When the hour of Jesus was nigh at hand, he must needs go to Jerusalem. So when the hour of these holy men was nigh at hand, they must needs go to Africa. As one goes and enters heaven, it just creates a vacancy for another to go and ripen for heaven, and then give place to others. It is said that candidates for promotion in the army and navy love not times of peace and continued life among their superiors. Such times hold them back. And can not our "young men, who are strong" in Christ Jesus, rejoice at the opening of the door for them to enter into great labors, and a speedy "recompense of reward," even though it be by crowning another brother in heaven to make room for them? And this leads to the last remark:

6. That these numerous and sudden deaths furnish perhaps the only hope that we shall soon obtain any thing like an adequate supply of missionaries for Africa. Perhaps the *death* of the good Harriet Newell has been the means of raising up more missionaries for the heathen world than



the *life* of any missionary who has toiled for twenty years on heathen ground. The great interest felt, and success had, by the United Brethren in their West India Missions, can easily be traced to some extent to the exceeding great mortality attending the first plantation of those missions. In regard to Africa, things will doubtless in the end work in the same way. The death of Samuel J. Mills, and of others, has already had a most blessed effect in behalf of Africa.

To the remnants of those numerous, powerful, and war-like tribes of aborigines of North America, we owe a debt of love not easily estimated. Bad men among us oppressed them, have broken faith with them. Let us do works meet for repentance. One has said: "It is true we have no millions to be preached to in a single language. Here are no splendid temples of idolatry to be overthrown. Infanticide is not to be arrested in parents, nor widows rescued from the funeral pyre. No car of Juggernaut is driven on the plains of Missouri or Arkansas. No offerings are committed to the Mississippi, under the mistaken belief that its waters are sacred. Nor do thousands of zealous devotees wander to a shrine of brick, which is supposed to contain a few hairs of Buddha or Vishnu. But here, in the bosom of our own territory, exist more than two hundred thousand men, women, and children, each of whom *has a soul to save or to lose*. Great numbers of these people speak the same language, and no small portion of them are favorably situated to practice agriculture, grazing, and the mechanical arts. Most of them have annuities to aid in the incipient work of civilization. They are not besotted, like seven eighths of the caste-ridden population of India, with the idea of a degraded birth. Nobler sentiments of natural liberty never were uttered than those which are embalmed in the history of their orators and warriors.

Their simple arts of magic and manito-worship totter with a touch. . . . We owe them a great debt. Our duty as philanthropists and our duty as Christians coincide. We fully respond to the sentiment of one of the recent delegates from the Congregational Churches of England, that our first and most imperious duty, with respect to heathen nations, is at home." If we give not the Gospel to these tribes, they will not have it.

The Indian tribes in New Mexico and California deserve attention. I would respectfully suggest whether some of our Foreign Missionary Boards ought not immediately to send two or three hardy, faithful men to explore those countries. Some of the Indian tribes are very powerful, warlike, and predatory. Like the Camanches, they are great horsemen. Such are the Navajoes and Apaches. They will probably prove so hostile and predatory that dragoons and rangers will cut them to pieces. One severe chastisement may possibly change their temper, but hardly will. Then there are the numerous tribes of "Diggers," hardly elevated in habits above the "prairie dog," but still having immortal souls. Can any thing be done for them? There are other tribes of a character opposite to both of the preceding classes. I especially refer to the Pimos, the Soones, the Moquis, and the Coco Maricopas. These tribes are opposed to war, though they punish, sometimes terribly, those who prey upon them. They never prey except in retaliation. They live in dense settlements, in permanent huts and cabins. They irrigate their lands. They grow corn, beans, pumpkins, etc. They grow and manufacture cotton. They are friendly to Americans. They hunt very little. They seem docile. The Maricopas are shrewd, and are said to learn languages with much facility. The influence of successful missions among these tribes would be happy in many ways. As a special motive to Americans to sus-

tain missions there, I might urge that these missions would furnish safe and pleasant resting-places to many weary and sick travelers, and many a child of prayer would probably close his eyes in death there, surrounded by Christian friends, who would point his dying eyes to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. Many a Christian parent, who now cares little for these people, will live to hear that his son died among the Pimos after a lingering illness.

Such are some of the peculiar and pressing claims of vast portions of the earth on the Christians of these United States. It may also be stated that, while these calls and claims have all the urgency stated, there are but few countries where our people would labor under any peculiar disadvantages in publishing the Gospel of the grace of God.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE SURE SUCCESS OF EVANGELIZATION.

MISSIONS will succeed. The zealous and judicious labors of good men in spreading the Gospel are not idle. No stronger argument can be made than that for the encouragement of pious and scriptural labors in evangelizing the world. Let us look at it calmly and candidly.

I. If there is any thing toward which the eyes of pious men ever turn with profound and peculiar interest, it is the death of Christ. It was the burden of prophecy. It gave meaning to the types. It has ever been the strength of hope to the righteous. On this theme the fire of the prophets burned with intensity. Since our Lord died on Calvary, the enlightened and spiritual members of his Church have sung, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the modern astronomy, the sun holds no more important place than that which in pure Christianity is filled by the death of Christ. It is the great central truth of the system. A world without a God would not be more an object of commiseration than a Church of sinful men without a crucified Saviour. No tragedy compares with the scenes of that upper room, of Gethsemane, of the judgment-hall, and of Calvary. Yet there is something in the death of Christ far more moving than its tragic power. The pious mind looks upon those amazing sufferings, and asks their cause. The Word of God answers, The mysterious sufferer was drinking the wine of the wrath of God, was expiating human guilt, was redeeming sinners, was treading the wine-press alone. Je-

hovah was smiting the man that was his fellow. The glittering sword of eternal justice was buried in the bosom of spotless innocence. Jesus was laying the foundations of his vast kingdom in righteousness and in a plenty of justice; in truth and faithfulness, without fiction or falsehood, mistake or deception; in love and mercy, endless and fathomless; in wisdom and in power; meeting all the demands of Heaven's law, and all the requirements of man's conscience. If we reverently inquire what occupied the mind of this Holy Sufferer while in his agony, inspiration gives the response. He was thinking of the glory of his Father. His thoughts were running on the peace, unity, purity, growth, and preservation of his Church. For a moment he thought of his aged mother, now perhaps a widow, and committed her to his friend. Again, he granted salvation to the only man that asked of him any favor, and bore the cup of blessing to the parched lips of the penitent thief. To the inquiry, What sustained him in that awful hour? the answer is, His divinity was his efficient support. But the Bible goes further. It lifts the veil from the rational soul of the sufferer in that hour of shame and wrath. Paul has told us many a great truth, and many a sweet truth respecting Christ. He says it was for the joy set before him that Christ endured the cross, despising the shame. Heb. xii., 2. The joy set before him consisted in good part in the sure prospect of the return of countless millions of sinners, coming home to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. He looked down the whole length of the vale of coming years, and saw myriads returning to duty and to God. This sustained him. He knew that his seed would for number be like the drops of the morning dew—a seed, not of one generation, nor of one century, nor of ten centuries, but a seed that should be increasing while sun and moon endure—a seed not mean

and despicable, but a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.

Glory to God in the highest, that among those cast out in their blood are millions of whom we may hope that Jesus remembered them in the tenderness of redeeming love, while he agonized in the garden and on the cross. We may surely expect that the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour. Such a vision sustained him in his agony. We know that he has not died in vain. We know that he shall not fail nor be discouraged until he have set judgment in the earth. We know that he never rejoiced in a thing of naught. "He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death." Isa. liii., 12. We are not called to preach salvation to a world for which Christ neither cared, nor wept, nor died. "From everlasting, when there were no depths, before the mountains were settled, he rejoiced in the habitable parts of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men." Prov. viii., 23-25, 31. On the cross his thoughts and his delights were the same.

This doctrine of the death of Christ lies at the foundation of all that brings hope to man. There is no stronger argument than that based on it. If a dying Saviour can redeem, a living Saviour can get the victory. All the redeemed on earth, as well as those in heaven, know by experience something of his love, and power, and grace. Each has sung:

"I was a stricken deer that left the herd long since:

With many an arrow, deep infixed, my panting side was charged,  
When I withdrew to seek a tranquil death in distant shades.  
There I was found by one, who had himself been hurt by archers;  
In his side he bore, and in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.  
With gentle force soliciting the darts, he drew them forth,  
And healed, and bade me live."



If we are called of God to preach his Word and point men to the Saviour, we speak of a Jesus whom we know, and whom having not seen we love.

Nor should we forget that as the blood of Christ shall never lose its power, so neither shall the doctrine of Christ's death. "The sage explores till wisdom falls asleep," and is yet the slave of sin. The philosopher speculates till he is lost in labyrinths of perplexity, but his conscience finds no rest. The outrageous sinner is corrected by his own iniquities, and punished by his own transgressions; but his enmity is unslain. The blinded formalist sews together the filthy rags of his own righteousness; but his nakedness still appears. The ferocious savage scorns the sublime and refined sentiments of a high civilization, and the prejudiced heathen devotee laughs to scorn the doctrines of a pure theism. All these wax worse and worse until they are taught from heaven the fact and the intent of the death of the Son of God. Then with one consent they begin to cease to do evil; and each of them says, "If this Saviour died for me, then he shall be my Saviour;" and the lion puts on the nature of the lamb; the spirit, as ungovernable as a storm and as fierce as a tempest, is calmed—subdued; the heart, as hard as adamant, is melted; pride falls down in adoring humility; the self-righteous covers his nakedness with garments of salvation; and enmity lays down all her arms, opens her store-house, and, like a thoughtless prodigal, pours out her gifts in honor of the great High-Priest of our profession. This blessed doctrine is still the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation. We have a Gospel to preach, and it contains the most melting story ever recited. It is the glorious Gospel of the happy God. Look at it as we may, and the death of Christ is the foundation of hope for the nations and of encouragement to the Church.

Earth and heaven shall yet sing: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." The death of Christ secures this sublime event.

II. Having died for us, Christ left not our cause, but became our intercessor in heaven. For this work he is eminently fitted. He well understands our cause; he is incapable of betraying it; he knows what human guilt, and human weakness, and human wickedness, and human wretchedness are. He is equal with God. Because he is Christ the righteous, he is well-pleasing to God.

Christ's intercession "is not a humble, dejected supplication, which befits not that glorious state of advancement of which he is possessor, who sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty on high." So far from this, it is rather "an authoritative presenting himself before the throne of his Father, sprinkled with his own blood, for the making out to his people all spiritual things that are procured by his oblation." So that what would be wicked in our prayers is quite fitting in his intercession. He says, "Father, I will." No sinner, no mere creature, may so address God. But our intercessor may thus speak, and his *will* shall have the force of law. The intercession of the high-priest under the law throws some light on the intercession of our Saviour. Fitly arrayed, and wearing his breast-plate containing the names of the chosen tribes, he took the burning coals of fire from off the altar, and the appointed sweet incense, and came within the veil, and put the incense upon the fire; and the cloud of incense covered the mercy-seat. Then he took the blood, which had just been shed, and sprinkled it on the propitiatory seven times, and then confessed the errors of the people, and sued for mercy in their behalf. So "Christ being come a high-priest of good things to come, by a greater and more per-

fect tabernacle, not made with hands, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. ix., 11, 12. Those for whom this intercession is made, though in themselves most unworthy, have long been objects of divine and tender regard. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," says God to his people. Christ and his Father are one in being, one in counsel. So that the intercession of our Saviour fully coincides with the love of the Father, and so must prevail. The Scripture abundantly testifies the efficacy of Christ's mediation in our behalf. Just before his passion, our Lord said: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me; and I knew that thou hearest me always." John xi., 41, 42. For ages the saints have been assured of a final and glorious triumph by the power of the intercession of our great High-Priest. Millions of saints, in the hour of trial and despondency, have with hope and joy heard the words, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Luke xxii., 31, 32. Upon this strong rock God's people have stood and sung the song of Miriam: "The Lord hath triumphed gloriously." God himself has closely connected the greatness and certainty of Christ's reward with his glorious intercession: "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Psal. ii., 7, 8. Is not this enough? We can have no higher assurance of the final triumph of the truth than that given by the intercession of Christ. Unbelief may demand other ground of confidence, but faith is satisfied.

III. The absolutely certain success of missions may also be learned from the covenant of redemption. Some sound



and able divines do not distinguish between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace ; but there seems to be good ground for the distinction. In the covenant of redemption, the Father and the Son are the *equal* parties. In the covenant of grace, God and man are the unequal parties. The covenant of redemption was made in *eternity*, before all worlds. The covenant of grace was made in *time*, after the creation and fall of man. The parties to the covenant of redemption had in each other infinite confidence, and so no surety was required. The parties to the covenant of grace had no confidence in each other, and therefore a daysman, that could lay his hand upon them both, was indispensable. The Father and the Son had the same glorious nature. They were one in essence. They needed none to reconcile them. God is one. God and man possessed natures wholly different. God was angry with man every day, and man was in a state of enmity against God. To reconcile them there must be a mediator. Thus much for the distinction between these covenants.

In the covenant of redemption, God promised the subjection of all flesh to Christ. The Scriptures most full on this are a maschal of Ethan the Ezrahite found in the eighty-ninth Psalm. Read it. See also the forty-ninth chapter of the evangelical prophet. Hear some of the words of this latter seer : "The Lord said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain : yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, thus saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him. Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that

thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. . . . Behold, these shall come from far: and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim." Isa. xlix., 3-9, 12.

In understanding this passage, it may aid us to remember: 1. The name "Israel" in the first verse quoted is supposed to refer to Christ, the true Prince that prevails with God.

2. The promise of reward for services rendered by the Son seems to be made by the Father, and upon his estimate of what was right. The work of salvation is as agreeable to the Father as to the Son. The Father required no mediation to make him placable or benevolent. Christ died not to make his Father merciful, but to enable him to be just in justifying the ungodly.

3. The promise here made is so large that if the Jewish Church were left out of the account, the reward should still be glorious. The end of the earth, the Gentiles, the prisoners, the people in darkness, and the desolate heritages, are forms of expressions denoting the vastness of the empire secured.

4. It is a matter of interest that in this prophecy the greatest empire of the world now and for thousands of years past is particularly mentioned. By the land of Sinim we are to understand China.

5. The grant here made is upon the faithfulness of the Father (verse 7). God, who can not lie, has said these things shall surely be done: and they shall be done.

6. These and like Scriptures reveal a glorious covenant between the Father and the Son, stipulating that nations the most degraded, and the most remote from the scenes of prophecy, are embraced in the compassings of redeeming mercy. He knew that a great and vast people had been given him by the Father, and he said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." John vi., 37.

IV. We are no less assured of the success of missions by the engagements of the covenant of grace.

In this covenant both God the Father and Christ the Surety pledge the divine faithfulness to the fulfillment of every promise. This covenant secures to all believers every spiritual blessing, by which lost men can become entitled to eternal glory, and fitted for the enjoyment of God. But some of its most cheering and enlarged promises have special reference to the glory and amplitude of Christ's reward. The very first promise was, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Such a deadly blow as is implied in bruising his head involves a great deal, and leads us to expect the most glorious changes for the better. To Abraham God said, "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In later times, by the son of Beer, Jehovah says: "I will betroth thee unto me forever: yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness. . . . And I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy;



and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." Hos. ii., 19, 20, 23. By another prophet God thus covenants with his Church: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." Isa. liv., 17. Again: "The Gentiles shall come to the brightness of thy rising. . . . The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the multitudes of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah, all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee. . . . The rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee. . . . The sons of strangers shall build thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary. . . . The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. . . . Thy people shall be all-righteous." Isa. lx., in many places. These promises of the covenant are all sure. On them our reliance may be, ought to be, both implicit and unlimited. Even in the hour of seeming discomfiture, the Church may lift up her head, and her horn, and her voice, and shout, He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.

Both of these covenants secure the most glorious things, both are unchangeable, both are confirmed by promises and oaths. Neither of them can be annulled. For "if it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto." Jesus shall see of the travail of his soul, and SHALL BE SATISFIED.

The fair conclusions from such glorious teachings are

many and cheering. A few of them may be here stated.

1. Let not the friends of the Redeemer be soon shaken in mind, nor troubled by the confusions of earth, by the insolence of God's enemies, by the fewness of Christ's real friends, nor by the treachery of false professors. There have always been wicked men on earth, who have taken counsel against the Lord and against his Christ; but they have never prevailed. Let us have faith in God—a faith that never falters.

2. Let us abound in prayer. At this time we probably more need an increase of fervent, effectual prayer than any thing else. Without this counsels are timid or carnal, labor is vain, success is precarious, and God is offended. When God promises by the great prophet of the River Chebar, "I will increase them with men like a flock," he adds, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." Ezek. xxxvi., 37. In heaven the golden vials full of odors contain the prayers of saints. Rev. v., 8. There is no substitute for hearty calling upon God. Let pastors set the example, and train and encourage their people to much earnest prayer for the conversion of the world.

3. It is for a joy that so much of the work of redemption is already done. The ransom is all paid. Mockery, spitting, and crucifixion are over. The grave has delivered up the crucified. The blood has been sprinkled on the mercy-seat. The Spirit has been poured out. Millions have been called, cleansed, and saved. All the means are provided, and all the plans devised for subduing the world to Christ. Let us test their sovereign efficacy.

4. Let us count no sacrifice great, no self-denial irksome, if we may but glorify God and bring men to Christ. One soul is worth all the effort ever made by man to save it.

Men are perishing. We know of a remedy for their maladies. Let us not keep silence, but proclaim the glad tidings of salvation.

5. And what the Christians of any one age may do for the advancement of the cause of the Redeemer, they must do quickly and earnestly. The night cometh, when no man can work. Gordon Hall was right, and consulted his own eternal happiness and the honor of his Lord when he refused ten thousand dollars a year for two hours in each of six days in the week, to be given to secular employment. Oh, for a zeal that should eat us up! We need the baptism of fire—fire from heaven.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

### SAYINGS FOR MINISTERS.

THERE is a kind of professional literature transmitted from one generation to another among artisans, farmers, merchants, lawyers, teachers, and physicians. Why should not the same be true of ministers of the Gospel? The least cultivated portions of society have their sayings and anecdotes, which mightily influence their minds. It is very important that each man should have before his mind the best maxims and sayings of his calling, avoiding such as are low or erroneous.

The following selection is made in the hope that it may be useful to ministers. It may, at least, suggest a plan for such a selection as will suit each one's case. Let every man compile for himself a body of sayings suited to guard the weak points of his own character. If a rule is sound and rightly understood, and yet makes us uneasy, we have good cause for suspecting that we have some serious defect or fault of character.

Lord Bacon's law maxims, well understood, would almost make one a lawyer. They would save a thoughtful man from many a sad mistake. It would well repay any man, particularly any preacher, to read *The Lessons of Proverbs*, by Richard C. Trench. In 1847 there was published in Princeton, N. J., a small volume called *The Rev. Matthew Henry's Aphorisms on the Ministry, the Church, and other Kindred Subjects*. It was compiled by the Rev. Colin McIver. Whether the public taste will call for another edition is doubtful, and yet it contains many excel-

lent things. For valuable suggestions, one may well consult the Remains of Mason, Brown of Haddington, Cecil, and Nevins; also the writings of Jeremy Taylor, and that class of rich old authors. The first here given are without regard to order of subject.

FROM GISBORNE.

“He who solicitously seeks to distinguish himself in the pulpit by a display of elegance and profundity of learning, proves himself deficient in some of the leading virtues which ought to characterize a Christian minister.”

FROM ARCHBISHOP SECKER.

“Discourses containing little that awakens drowsy attention, little that enforces plainly and home what men must do to be saved, leave them as unreformed as ever.”

FROM BISHOP HOPKINS.

“Wicked ministers are like those statues which in old times were set up in cross-ways, with their arms extended to point out the road to passengers, but themselves walked not in them.”

FROM SKELTON.

“In no one sermon I ever preached, had I one lesson for myself and another for my hearers; my heart and conscience always made part of my audience.”

FROM AMBROSE.

“Robert Bolton, B.D., who died 1631, entered so deeply into the work of the ministry, that he said he never delivered a sermon to his people in public till he had preached it to himself in private.”

FROM HARRISON.

“Did we know and enjoy Christ more, how active would it make us in his service; how zealous for his glory; how impatient of the disgrace which men, full of themselves, but empty of Christ, are casting upon him.”

FROM LUTHER.

“I always found myself in the best temper for study when I had first composed my thoughts and raised up my affections by prayer.”

FROM OWEN.

“To preach the Gospel properly is to handle every subject of discourse so as to keep Christ continually in view of the hearers. Hast thou permitted greediness of studies to eat up other duties?”

FROM BISHOP BURNET.

“That is not the best sermon which makes the hearers go away talking to one another and praising the speaker, but which makes them go away thoughtful and serious, and hastening to be alone.”

FROM CECIL.

“If a man has a dry, logical, scholastic turn of mind, we shall rarely find him an interesting preacher.”

FROM T. WATSON.

“Every minister should engage both his mind and his heart in his work; his head with labor and his heart with love.”



FROM GISBERT.

“To be excessively heated, when the subject admits of only moderate warmth, is a kind of madness out of season.”

FROM REYBEZ.

“Be calm in general, in order to be vehement when the proper juncture shall arrive.”

FROM BLAIR.

✓ “True eloquence is the art of placing truth in the most advantageous light for conviction and persuasion. Be concerned much more to persuade than to please.”

FROM MASON.

“Let us aim in every sermon to please God and profit our people ; to do them good, rather than gain applause.”

FROM DR. WATTS.

“Guard against a love of pleasure, a sensual temper, and indulgence of appetite, an excessive relish of wine and dainties. This carnalizes the soul, and gives occasion to the world to reproach too justly.”

FROM HOWE.

✓ “When we see how little is done, how little effect the Gospel hath, for the most part, it may make many a sad, misgiving heart among us.”

FROM BRIDGES.

“Discouragements, properly sustained and carefully improved, will become the most fruitful sources of eventual encouragement in the Christian ministry ; and love to our

work will bear us on in the midst of and above all our difficulties."

FROM J. COOK.

"The assuming magisterial airs in the pulpit is incompatible."

FROM J. NEWTON.

"If I want a man to fly, I must contrive to find him wings; if I would successfully enforce moral duties, I must advance evangelical motives."

FROM T. FULLER.

"Surely that preaching which comes from the soul most works on the soul."

FROM BAXTER.

"I have these forty years been sensible of the sin of losing time; I could not spare an hour."

FROM C. MATHER.

"Never did any minister repent of his labor in catechising."

FROM MASSILLON.

"A pastor who does not pray, who does not love prayer, does not belong to that Church which prays without ceasing."

FROM THE LIFE OF JOSEPH ALLEINE.

"When he came to any house to take up his abode there, he brought salvation with him; when he departed, he left salvation behind him."

FROM XAVIER.

"East and west, north and south, are all indifferent to me, provided I have an opportunity of advancing the glory of our Lord."

## FROM UNKNOWN AUTHORS.

“The art of fine speaking is one thing, that of persuasion is another.”

“O! how much easier it is to preach from the understanding than from the heart.”

“Exclaim and thunder against vice; but spare and respect persons.”

“A minister’s acceptance and usefulness depend as much on his conduct as on his talents.”

“Dull and pointless arrows are ill suited to pierce the conscience of hardened sinners.”

“Is the skill and discernment employed in increasing the resources and glory of earthly kingdoms to be compared with the divine science of saving immortal souls?”

“I fear many things, which employ a large portion of our retired time, are studied rather as polite amusements to our own minds, than as things which seem to have any apparent subserviency to the glory of God and the edification of our flocks.”

“The morning hour has gold in its mouth.”

“Every day in thy life is a leaf in thy history.”

“Learning consists in knowing where learning may be found.”

## FROM MATTHEW HENRY.

“When God calls to any service, he will be sure to furnish with necessary assistance.—Those whom God finds work for, he will find help for.—To those to whom God gives a charge, he will be sure to give encouragement.—The ministry is the best *calling*, but the worst *trade* in the world.—That which ministers speak from their own hearts is most likely to reach the hearts of their hearers.—It is next to impossible that any thing of religion should be kept up without a preaching ministry.—In times of peril, ministers



should be examples of courage and confidence in the divine goodness.—Who should lead, in a good work, if the priests, the Lord's ministers, do not?—He can never be a profitable seer who is either always or never alone.—It well becomes the fathers of the prophets to be liberal to the sons of the prophets.—Ministers do not lose their labor, if they be but instrumental to save one poor soul.—Ministers should be first and foremost in every good work.”

FROM MCCHEYNE.

“Expect much, and much will be given.—Souls are perishing every day; and our entrance into eternity can not be far distant.—Let us, like Mary, do what we can, and no doubt God will bless it, and reward us openly.—Seek to be lamb-like; without this all your efforts to do good to others will be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.—Get much of the hidden life in your own soul; soon it will make life spread around.—Never forget that the end of a sermon is the salvation of the people.—‘Cleave to the Lord;’ not to man, but to the Lord.—Do not fear the face of men. Remember how small their anger will appear in eternity.—Oh, fight hard against sin and the devil. The devil never sleeps; be ye also active for good.—But an inch of time remains, and the eternal ages roll on forever; but an inch on which we stand and preach the way of salvation to the perishing world.—It is not great talents God blesses, so much as great likeness to Jesus. A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God.—I am just an interpreter of Scripture in my sermons.”—It is said of McCheyne, “He fed on the Word, not in order to prepare himself for his people, but for personal edification. To do so was a rule with him.”

## FROM CHALMERS.

“Do thou, O Lord, break my heart, and then heal my broken one.—May thy grace, O Lord, open a way for thy Word into our hearts, and strengthen us to act upon it.—Let me bridle my tongue so that the impulses of passion shall not hurry me into idle words.”

## FROM THOMAS SHEPARD.

On his death-bed he said to some young ministers, “Remember: 1. The studying of every sermon costs tears. 2. Before I preached a sermon, I got good by it myself. 3. I went to the pulpit as if I were to give up my account to my Master.”

He used to say, “God will curse that man’s labors, who goes idly up and down all the week, and then goes into his study on a Saturday afternoon. God knows that we have not too much time to pray in, and weep in, and get our hearts into a fit frame for the duties of the Sabbath.”

## FROM MINUTIUS M. FELIX.

“We compute our nobility not by blood, but by our manners.”

“The Christian art of possessing all things is by desiring nothing.”

“We had much rather be able to despise riches than to possess them.”

## RULES FOR GIVING INSTRUCTION.

1. A little at a time, and often repeated, is the secret of success. The Bible has it, Line upon line, precept upon precept.

2. When you give a definition, let it be clear. A good description is better than a poor definition.

3. Do not suppose your labor lost because you are not

able to make people understand *every* thing. "Wonder is broken knowledge." Most of the knowledge in the world is of that kind.

4. Never upbraid people with a want of capacity; but try to interest them.

5. Find out the meaning of these words: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly."

6. Improve passing events. Things are often good simply because they are seasonable.

7. Avoid a gloomy countenance and manner.

8. Yet beware of levity. Frivolity on sacred themes is shocking to a pious mind.

9. Persevere. I once gave two whole days to teach a child the Lord's Prayer. I succeeded.

#### ZEAL AND CHARITY.

More than a thousand years ago these good rules were proposed to Christians:

"In things necessary, unity; in things lawful, liberty; in all things, charity."

"We ought, indeed, to be as lambs in our own cause, but as lions in the cause of God."—*Mrs. Savage.*

"In moody humors the truth comes out."

"In those things that all the people of God are agreed about, I will spend my zeal; and as for other things about which they differ, I will walk according to the light God has given me, and charitably believe others do so too."—*Philip Henry.*

#### PIETY.

"Gospel holiness includes a heart broken for sin, a heart broken off from sin, and a perpetual conflict with sin."—*Medley.*

"The wisdom of man lies not in satirizing the vices of others, but in correcting his own."—*Milner.*



“To be amended by a little cross, afraid of a little sin, and affected with a little mercy, is a good evidence of grace in the soul.”—*Mrs. Parsons*.

“I had rather see the real impressions of a god-like temper upon my own soul, than have a vision from heaven, or an angel sent to tell me that my name was enrolled in the Book of Life.”

“He who refuses to obey the truth loses his power of discerning truth. Many resolve by determining not to resolve.”

#### PREACH THE WORD.

“The Word of God is quick and powerful.”—*Paul*.

“When others preach for the times, do you preach for eternity. When they preach mere morality, do you preach the love of Christ. When they deal out metaphysics, do you proclaim salvation by atoning blood.”

#### USE MUCH BOLDNESS.

“Speak fearlessly. Mince not your words. The awkwardness of time will be nothing in the realities of eternity.”

“In the next world, men will not thank ministers for having spoken smooth things, or for having lustily cried, Peace, peace, when there was no peace. Whatever men may say of such preaching in this world, in the next they will curse it all.”

#### MINISTERS MUST GROW.

“What was *knowledge* in the thirteenth century is *ignorance* now. What was *energy* then is *imbecility* and *stupidity* now. It becomes not our sacred profession, in this period of intellectual progress, to remain like the ship that is moored to its station, only to mark the rapidity of the current that is sweeping by. Let the intelligence of the age outstrip us and leave us behind, and religion will sink, with its teachers, into insignificance. Ignorance can

not wield this intelligence. Give to the Church a feeble ministry, and the world breaks from your hold; your main-spring of moral influence is gone.”—*Dr. E. Porter.*

#### A MINISTER'S STUDIES.

“Time is the author of authors.”—*Bacon.*

“It is, in my opinion, not any honor to a minister to be very famous in any branch that is wholly unconnected with theology.” — *Witherspoon.*

“Te totum applica ad textum; rem totam applica ad te.”—*Bengel.*

“During twenty-two years' experience as an instructor of theological students, I have heard not a few young men lament their own haste in entering the ministry, but not an individual have I known to intimate that he had spent too much time in preparatory studies.”—*Dr. E. Porter.*

#### CHOOSE RIGHT WORDS.

“Teaching is not a flow of words nor the draining of an hour-glass. God will not accept the offals of other professions. Gaudery is a pitiful and mean thing. A substantial beauty, as it comes out of the hand of nature, needs neither paint nor putty. Thus it is with the most necessary and important truths. To adorn and clothe them is to cover them, and thus to obscure them. The eternal salvation and damnation of souls are not things to be treated with jests and witticisms; and he who thinks to furnish himself out of plays and romances with language for the pulpit shows himself much fitter to act a part in the revels than to have the care of souls.”—*South.*

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

“We must have the taste of manna in our mouth, milk and honey under our tongue, else we can not tell of its sweetness.”

“I can conceive of a living man without an arm or a leg, but not without a head or a heart; so there are some truths which are essential to vital religion, and which all awakened souls are taught. The regenerate soul knows their power.”

“If a man does not *taste*, he will never *see* that the Lord is good. One of the best scientific books of its day on light was written by a man born blind; but the child that could see had far better ideas of the true nature of light than Sanderson the philosopher.”

#### PRAYER.

“There is nothing gained by stealing, and there is nothing lost by praying.”—*Dutch Proverb*.

“Bene orasse est bene studuisse.”—*Luther*.

“I presume that vigorous piety is never maintained without *systematic* attention to reading the Scriptures and secret prayer.”—*Dr. E. Porter*.

“Prayer and preaching are the two most important things done in this world. They well go together. Apostles did nothing greater.”—Acts vi., 4.

“It is said that Dr. Moses Hoge, of Virginia, who died in 1822, seldom slept a night preceding a communion; and that more than half of every Sabbath night was spent in bewailing his unprofitableness and in pleading for more grace.”

“God is sometimes found of them that seek him not; but he is always found of them that seek him.”—*M. Henry*.

#### MINISTERS' SINS.

“If God were to deal with men according to their works (I will not except the Apostle Paul), the hottest place in hell would be the lot of us ministers.”—*Brown, of Haddington*.



“A man had better have all the blood of all men in all the ages of the world to answer for, than the blood of one single soul.”—*Brooks*.

I once heard a minister say that he did not know which were the greater, our sins or God's mercies. I wonder he did not know that. Isa. lv., 7-9.

One of the least effectual methods of putting down the false doctrines of perfectionists is so to live that men will see that we do not *desire* to be perfectly holy.

The murder of souls is the most horrible murder.

#### SUCCESS AND THE WANT OF IT.

“Speak unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.”—*Jehovah*.

“If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”—*Ib.*

“My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”—*Ib.*

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—*Jesus Christ*.

“We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.”—*Paul*.

“If the iron be blunt, then must he put to the more strength.”—*Solomon*.

“We must follow the command and calling of God, whether we have good success or no, and whatever comes of it. Though Paul feared his labor was in vain, yet still he labored. Thus to do, whatever follows, is true wisdom and the fear of God.”—*W. Perkins*.

“Why do you leave off preaching?” said Latimer to one. “Because I do no good,” was the reply. Latimer answered, “That, brother, is a naughty, very naughty reason.”

“You say you do no good by preaching. This is talking weakly; I had almost used a harder word. Should you not be chided for it?”—*Orton*.

“A quiet application to those duties which are immediately necessary, though neither easy nor honorable, is of much more value than a long train of activity and zeal in a sphere of action sweetened by applause.”

“Ministers prevent much evil and do much good, of which they know nothing till they enter eternity.”

“I would rather serve Christ for nothing, than gain all the kingdoms of the world as the fruit of any sin, idleness not excepted.”

“Do not rest without success in your ministry. Under a lively ministry, success is the rule; want of it, the exception.”

#### OLD AGE.

“O Lord, help an old man.”

“Now is your salvation nearer than when ye believed.”

“O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also, when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not.”—*David*.

“I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”—*Paul*.

“If I ever reach the kingdom of heaven, I think I will try to find the penitent thief who died on the cross, and take him by the hand, and say, Come, my brother, let us go aside, and see if we can find out which of us is the greatest debtor to the grace of God.”—*Conrad Speece*, at his last communion.

“If I can set an example of cheerfulness and submission under the infirmities of old age, it may be more useful than my best sermon.”

“Like Samson in his old age, I continually forget that I am not what I once was; but when I take hold of the strength of God, results astonish me.”

An old writer thus describes an infirm old man: “Multâ cauterâ custoditur salus corporis; custodita, cito amittitur; amissa, cum gravi labore reparatur; et tamen reparatur, semper in dubio est.”

“Many hours and some whole days I am quite laid aside as useless, and often in great pain and weakness. But, having obtained help of God, I continue to this day; and, blessed be his name, have some intervals of ease and cheerfulness, which I hope are employed to some valuable purposes. I read my good old books, in which there is a savor and suitableness to my case, which I find in few modern ones. I beg the continuance of your prayers for me, that I may be doing some little good while I am continued here, and be growing more and more meet for a nobler sphere of service, when my Master calls me hence.”—*Orton*.





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